

**INFLUENCE OF STRATEGIC AGILITY ON COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE
AMONG THE HEALTHCARE NGOS IN MANDERA COUNTY KENYA**

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DECLARATION AND APPROVAL

Declaration by the student

This proposal is my original work and has not been presented for any award in this or any other university.

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The work stated in this proposal was done by the applicant while under my supervision, and I thus attest to this fact.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family who have been an inspiration, and mentors in my life.



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I thank God Almighty for the opportunity to be alive and in a position to work on this research. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor and advisor Dr. Maria for her guidance, suggestions and invaluable time she has spent with me since the inception of this research. I express my profound thanks to all those who have directly or indirectly guided me and helped me throughout my research work.



ABSTRACT

Strategic agility is critical for organizations operating in dynamic and unpredictable environments. The study examines the influence of strategic agility on the competitive advantage of healthcare non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Mandera County, Kenya. The purpose of this study is to investigate how strategic agility impacts the competitive positioning of healthcare NGOs in this region. The specific objectives are to determine the effect of process flexibility on competitive advantage, to examine the effect of cost leadership on competitive advantage, to establish the effect of innovation on competitive advantage, and to determine the effect of service reliability on competitive advantage. This study is significant as it provides insights into how healthcare NGOs can leverage strategic agility to enhance service delivery and sustain their operations in a challenging environment. The study utilizes the Dynamic Capabilities Theory and the Resource-Based View to frame its analysis. A descriptive survey design is employed, targeting 70 key personnel from 10 healthcare NGOs in Mandera County, including NGO managers, program coordinators, and healthcare providers. A census sampling method is used, ensuring comprehensive coverage of the target population. Data will be collected using semi-structured questionnaires, piloted in a nearby county to ensure validity and reliability. Data analysis will involve both descriptive and inferential statistics, using SPSS software to determine the relationships between the variables. This study explores the influence of strategic agility on competitive advantage among healthcare NGOs in Mandera County, Kenya, focusing on flexibility, cost leadership, innovation, and service reliability. With a high response rate of 92.86%, the findings reveal several key insights. Flexibility, particularly through adaptable staffing and reconfigurable workflows, showed a moderate positive correlation with competitive advantage ($r = 0.682$), enhancing responsiveness to shifting healthcare demands. Cost leadership emerged as essential, with significant positive effects ($B = 0.451$, $p < 0.002$), underscoring the importance of cost-saving measures and competitive pricing in maintaining affordability and operational sustainability. Innovation was similarly impactful, with a strong positive correlation to competitive advantage ($r = 0.759$) and significant predictive value ($B = 0.392$, $p < 0.013$), highlighting the value of technological investments and creative problem-solving. Most notably, service reliability emerged as the strongest predictor, with a robust positive correlation ($r = 0.814$) and substantial impact on competitive advantage ($B = 0.467$, $p < 0.001$), underscoring the critical role of trust and client retention. The study concludes that healthcare NGOs can enhance their competitive edge by prioritizing service reliability, adopting cost-effective strategies, and fostering a culture of continuous innovation. Although flexibility showed slightly lower significance, it remains crucial in the dynamic healthcare landscape. Recommendations include promoting versatile staffing, rigorous cost management, strategic innovation investments, and quality assurance mechanisms to strengthen service reliability. Future research could investigate the long-term impact of these strategies on healthcare NGOs across diverse contexts, offering broader insights into sustaining competitive advantage in resource-constrained settings.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION AND APPROVAL	II
DEDICATION	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	IV
ABSTRACT	V
TABLE OF CONTENTS	VI
LIST OF TABLES.....	VIII
LIST OF FIGURES.....	X
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.....	XI
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.1.1 Healthcare NGOs.....	5
1.1.2 Competitive Advantage	7
1.2 Problem Statement.....	9
1.3 Purpose of the Study.....	11
1.3.1 Specific Objectives of the Study	11
1.4 Research Questions	11
1.5 Significance of the Study.....	12
1.6 Scope of the Study	13
1.7 Limitation of the study	13
1.8 Delimitation of the study	14
1.9 Assumptions of the Study.....	15
1.10 Operational definition of key terms.....	16
CHAPTER TWO.....	18
LITERATURE REVIEW	18
2.0 Introduction	18
2.1 Theoretical Literature	18
2.1.1 Dynamic Capabilities Theory.....	18
2.1.2 Resource-Based View	22
2.2 Theoretical Framework	26
2.3 Empirical Literature.....	26
2.3.1 Effect of Process Flexibility on Competitive Advantage	26

2.3.2 Effect of Cost Leadership on Competitive Advantage.....	29
2.3.3 Effect of Innovation on Competitive Advantage.....	32
2.3.4 Effect of Service Reliability on Competitive Advantage.....	34
2.4 Conceptual Framework	37
2.5 Research Gaps	38
CHAPTER THREE.....	41
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	41
3.0 Introduction	41
3.1 Research Design	41
3.2 Area of Study.....	42
3.3 Target Population	42
3.4 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size	43
3.5 Construction of research instruments	43
3.6 Testing for Piloting, validity and reliability	44
3.6.1 Piloting	44
3.6.2 Reliability of the Research Instruments	44
3.6.3 Validity of the Research Instruments	45
3.6.4 Establishing Credibility of the Research Instruments	45
3.7 Data Collection Methods and Procedures	46
3.8 Data Analysis Methods.....	46
3.9 Ethical Consideration	47
CHAPTER FOUR	49
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS	49
4.1 Introduction	49
4.2 Response Rate	49
4.3 Socio-Demographic Characteristics	50
4.4 Descriptive Analysis.....	51
4.4.1 Flexibility on Competitive Advantage	51
4.4.2 Cost Leadership on Competitive Advantage.....	54
4.4.3 Innovation on Competitive Advantage.....	57
4.4.3 Service Reliability on Competitive Advantage	60
4.4.4 Competitive Advantage	63
4.5 Inferential Analysis	65

4.5.1 Model Summary	65
4.5.2 Correlation Analysis	66
4.5.3 Regression Analysis	67
4.5.4 ANOVA	68
4.6 Discussion of Findings	69
4.6.1 Flexibility on Competitive Advantage	69
4.6.2 Cost Leadership on Competitive Advantage	71
4.6.3 Innovation on Competitive Advantage	73
4.6.4 Service Reliability on Competitive Advantage	76
4.6.4 Competitive Advantage	78
CHAPTER FIVE	82
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION	82
5.1 Introduction	82
5.2 Summary of Findings	82
5.3 Conclusion	84
5.4 Recommendations	85
5.5 Recommendations Further Research	86
REFERENCES	88
APPENDICES	93
Appendix I: Introduction	93
Appendix II: Consent Form	94
Appendix III: Questionnaire	96
Appendix IV: ERC Letter	100
Appendix V: Introduction Letter	101
Appendix VI: NACOSTI Authorization	102
Appendix VII: Similarity Index	103

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Target Population	42
Table 2: Response Rate	49
Table 3: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents	50
Table 4: Flexibility on Competitive Advantage	52
Table 5: Cost Leadership on Competitive Advantage	54

Table 6: Innovation on Competitive Advantage	57
Table 7: Service Reliability on Competitive Advantage	60
Table 8: Competitive Advantage	63
Table 9: Model Summary	66
Table 10: Correlation Coefficients	66
Table 11: Regression Coefficients.....	67
Table 12: ANOVA	68



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework.....	26
Figure 2: Conceptual Framework.....	38



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AMREF	:	African Medical and Research Foundation
ARA	:	Afya Research Africa
CAM	:	Complementary and Alternative Medicine
CCBRT	:	Comprehensive Community-Based Rehabilitation in Tanzania
CHAG	:	Christian Health Association of Ghana
CIDRZ	:	Centre for Infectious Disease Research in Zambia
EAC	:	East African Community
HERFON	:	Health Reform Foundation of Nigeria
IDI	:	Infectious Diseases Institute
IRC	:	International Rescue Committee
KeRRA	:	Kenya Rural Roads Authority
MSF	:	Médecins Sans Frontières
NGO	:	Non-Governmental Organization
PATH	:	Program for Appropriate Technology in Health
POC	:	Protection of Civilians
RBV	:	Resource-Based View
SPSS	:	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
WASH	:	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, an overview of marketing strategies, statement of the problem, the objectives of the research (broad and specific objectives), significant of the study, limitation of the study and the scope of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Strategic agility refers to the ability of an organization to swiftly adapt to changes in the environment to maintain or achieve competitive advantage. This capability is increasingly critical in the current dynamic global market where rapid technological advancements, regulatory changes, and shifting consumer preferences necessitate constant vigilance and adaptability (Doz & Kosonen, 2010). The concept of strategic agility encompasses various dimensions including process flexibility, cost leadership, innovation, and service reliability, each contributing uniquely to an organization's competitive edge (Teece, Peteraf, & Leih, 2016). As businesses navigate an increasingly complex and unpredictable environment, the ability to pivot quickly in response to changes has become a defining characteristic of successful organizations (Lewis, Andriopoulos, & Smith, 2014). The capacity to anticipate market shifts, react to competitive threats, and seize new opportunities is at the heart of strategic agility (Weber & Tarba, 2014). This adaptability is not only about reacting to change but also about shaping the environment to create favorable conditions for sustained competitive advantage. The strategic decisions made by firms today can significantly impact their market positioning and overall performance in the future (Doz, 2020).

In the global context, strategic agility has been pivotal for companies operating in highly competitive and volatile markets. For instance, in the United States, tech giant Apple Inc.

has exemplified strategic agility through its continuous innovation and flexibility in product development and marketing strategies. Apple's ability to swiftly respond to market demands and technological advancements has consistently positioned it ahead of competitors, securing a dominant market share and robust financial performance (Cusumano, Gawer, & Yoffie, 2019). The company's strategic agility is evident in its approach to product design and development, where it integrates consumer feedback and emerging trends to refine its offerings continuously. By maintaining a flexible supply chain and leveraging advanced manufacturing techniques, Apple can introduce new products rapidly and efficiently. Furthermore, Apple's marketing strategies are highly adaptive, allowing it to capitalize on shifting consumer preferences and market dynamics. The company's focus on creating an ecosystem of interconnected devices and services enhances customer loyalty and provides a significant competitive advantage.

Similarly, in Europe, automobile manufacturer BMW has leveraged strategic agility to navigate the complex automotive industry. By adopting flexible manufacturing processes and a robust innovation strategy, BMW has managed to maintain a competitive advantage despite economic downturns and shifting regulatory landscapes. The company's agile approach to integrating new technologies, such as electric and autonomous vehicles, has ensured its relevance and competitiveness in the global market (Schwarz, 2020). BMW's ability to adapt to changing environmental regulations and consumer demands for sustainable and high-performance vehicles has been instrumental in maintaining its market position. The company's investments in research and development enable it to stay at the forefront of technological advancements, offering innovative solutions that meet the evolving needs of customers. BMW's strategic partnerships with tech firms and startups further enhance its agility, allowing it to incorporate cutting-edge technologies into its product lineup. This collaborative

approach not only accelerates innovation but also mitigates risks associated with rapid technological changes.

In Africa, the importance of strategic agility is evident in the telecommunications sector. In Nigeria, MTN Group has successfully employed strategic agility to maintain its market leadership amidst regulatory challenges and intense competition. MTN's ability to innovate, adapt to regulatory changes, and meet the diverse needs of its customer base has been crucial to its sustained competitive advantage in the region (Adeleke, 2019). The company's strategic agility is reflected in its rapid expansion into underserved areas, introduction of innovative products and services, and strategic partnerships with local and international firms. MTN's flexible approach to regulatory compliance and proactive engagement with regulatory bodies have enabled it to navigate complex regulatory environments effectively. By continuously investing in network infrastructure and leveraging advanced technologies, MTN enhances service quality and customer satisfaction, thereby reinforcing its market position. The company's focus on digital transformation and financial inclusion initiatives further underscores its commitment to strategic agility, as it seeks to address the evolving needs of its diverse customer base.

South Africa's retail sector also illustrates the significance of strategic agility. Retail giant Shoprite has utilized process flexibility and cost leadership to navigate the challenging economic environment. By continuously optimizing its supply chain and adopting cost-effective strategies, Shoprite has managed to expand its market presence across Africa, securing a competitive edge over local and international competitors (Matsaung, 2021). Shoprite's strategic agility is evident in its ability to quickly adjust its product offerings and pricing strategies in response to changing consumer preferences and economic conditions. The company's investments in technology and data analytics enable it to make informed decisions and enhance operational efficiency. Shoprite's focus on

customer-centric strategies, such as loyalty programs and personalized marketing, further strengthens its competitive advantage. Additionally, the company's commitment to sustainability and community engagement initiatives enhances its brand reputation and supports long-term growth. By leveraging strategic agility, Shoprite continues to thrive in a dynamic and competitive retail landscape, setting a benchmark for other retailers in the region.

In Kenya, the banking sector provides a compelling case for the role of strategic agility in achieving competitive advantage. Equity Bank has demonstrated remarkable agility through its innovative financial products and services tailored to the unique needs of the Kenyan market. By embracing technological advancements and maintaining process flexibility, Equity Bank has not only expanded its customer base but also enhanced its competitive positioning in the financial services industry (Mwangi, 2020). The bank's strategic agility is reflected in its adoption of mobile banking technologies, which have revolutionized access to financial services for millions of Kenyans. Equity Bank's flexible approach to product development and customer engagement allows it to quickly respond to market changes and emerging trends. The bank's commitment to financial inclusion and social impact initiatives further underscores its strategic agility, as it continuously seeks to address the diverse needs of its customer base. Through strategic partnerships and innovative solutions, Equity Bank has maintained its leadership position in the competitive Kenyan banking sector.

In the healthcare sector, Amref Health Africa has leveraged strategic agility to enhance its competitive advantage. Through continuous innovation and a flexible approach to healthcare delivery, Amref has managed to address the evolving health challenges in Kenya. The organization's ability to adapt to changing health needs and integrate new technologies has been instrumental in maintaining its leadership in the healthcare sector

(Njiru, 2021). Amref's strategic agility is evident in its diverse range of healthcare programs and initiatives, which are tailored to meet the specific needs of different communities. By adopting a community-based approach and leveraging partnerships with local and international stakeholders, Amref enhances the effectiveness and sustainability of its interventions. The organization's focus on capacity building and health system strengthening further supports its strategic agility, enabling it to respond effectively to emerging health threats and challenges. Through innovative solutions and adaptive strategies, Amref continues to play a critical role in improving health outcomes and achieving competitive advantage in the Kenyan healthcare landscape.

1.1.1 Healthcare NGOs

Healthcare non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a critical role in providing medical services, advocating for health-related issues, and implementing public health programs, especially in underserved regions. These organizations often fill gaps left by public health systems, offering essential services to populations that may otherwise lack access to healthcare. The operational strategies and adaptive capabilities of healthcare NGOs are pivotal to their effectiveness and sustainability, particularly in regions characterized by complex health challenges and limited resources (Gellert, 2020).

In many low- and middle-income countries, healthcare NGOs are instrumental in addressing pressing health concerns, including infectious diseases, maternal and child health, and non-communicable diseases. For instance, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), also known as Doctors Without Borders, exemplifies the impact of strategic agility in healthcare delivery. MSF's ability to rapidly deploy medical teams and resources in response to health emergencies has significantly contributed to its competitive advantage and operational effectiveness (MSF, 2019). The organization's strategic agility is evident in its flexible operational models, which allow it to adapt quickly to changing health

landscapes and emerging threats. By leveraging a robust network of volunteers and medical professionals, MSF can provide timely and effective healthcare interventions in crisis situations, enhancing its reputation and impact (MSF, 2019).

Similarly, in sub-Saharan Africa, healthcare NGOs such as AMREF Health Africa have demonstrated the importance of innovation and adaptability in achieving competitive advantage. AMREF's strategic approach to health service delivery involves the integration of digital health technologies and community-based interventions, which enhance the reach and effectiveness of its programs (Njiru, 2021). For example, AMREF's mobile health initiatives, which utilize mobile phone technology to deliver health information and services, have been crucial in improving health outcomes in remote and underserved areas. This strategic agility in leveraging technology and community engagement has enabled AMREF to address health challenges more efficiently and maintain a competitive edge in the healthcare sector (Njiru, 2021).

The strategic agility of healthcare NGOs also extends to their ability to secure funding and partnerships. In a rapidly changing global health landscape, the capacity to attract and manage diverse funding sources is essential for sustaining operations and expanding services. Organizations like PATH have excelled in this regard by developing innovative financing mechanisms and forming strategic partnerships with governments, private sector entities, and other NGOs (PATH, 2020). PATH's flexibility in adapting its funding strategies to align with donor priorities and emerging health needs has been instrumental in maintaining its financial stability and competitive advantage. This adaptability not only ensures the continuity of health programs but also enhances the organization's ability to scale successful interventions and expand its impact (PATH, 2020).

In addition, healthcare NGOs often engage in capacity building and health system strengthening to enhance their operational effectiveness and sustainability. For instance,

the International Rescue Committee (IRC) focuses on training local healthcare workers, improving health infrastructure, and advocating for policy changes to create more resilient health systems (IRC, 2019). By building local capacity and fostering sustainable health practices, IRC enhances its competitive advantage and ensures long-term impact in the communities it serves. This strategic focus on sustainability and local empowerment is critical in contexts where health systems are fragile and resources are limited (IRC, 2019).

The role of healthcare NGOs is particularly crucial in regions facing protracted crises and health emergencies. In such contexts, the ability to adapt quickly and innovate is essential for delivering effective health interventions. For example, during the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, NGOs like Save the Children and MSF demonstrated remarkable strategic agility by rapidly scaling up their operations, implementing innovative care protocols, and engaging communities in prevention efforts (Save the Children, 2018). This ability to respond swiftly to health emergencies not only mitigates the impact of crises but also strengthens the organization's reputation and competitive position in the global health arena (Save the Children, 2018).

1.1.2 Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage refers to the attributes or capabilities that allow an organization to outperform its competitors and achieve superior performance. It is a fundamental concept in strategic management, as it defines how a company can sustain its success and differentiate itself from rivals in a competitive market. The notion of competitive advantage is grounded in the ability of an organization to deliver greater value to its customers than its competitors, either through lower costs or by offering differentiated products or services that command a premium price (Porter, 1985; Rothaermel, 2017).

There are two primary types of competitive advantage: cost leadership and differentiation. Cost leadership involves becoming the lowest-cost producer in an industry, allowing the firm to offer products or services at a lower price than competitors while maintaining profitability (Porter, 1985; Hill & Schilling, 2019). Companies such as Walmart exemplify this strategy, leveraging economies of scale, efficient supply chain management, and cost-control mechanisms to achieve competitive advantage through lower prices (Gamble, Peteraf, & Thompson, 2020). On the other hand, differentiation involves offering unique products or services that are perceived as superior in some way, allowing the firm to charge a premium price (Porter, 1985; Hill & Schilling, 2019). Firms like Apple have successfully utilized differentiation strategies by emphasizing innovation, quality, and brand prestige, thereby establishing a strong market position and customer loyalty (Gamble, Peteraf, & Thompson, 2020).

The concept of competitive advantage is also closely linked to the resource-based view (RBV) of the firm, which posits that unique resources and capabilities are critical to achieving and sustaining a competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Wright, & McMahan, 2019). According to RBV, firms that possess valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable resources can leverage these assets to gain a competitive edge over rivals (Barney, 1991; Wright, & McMahan, 2019). This perspective highlights the importance of internal capabilities and resources, such as technological expertise, brand reputation, and organizational culture, in shaping competitive advantage.

In addition to traditional strategies, the modern business environment has introduced new dimensions of competitive advantage, including digital capabilities and strategic agility. Organizations that can rapidly adapt to technological changes, market shifts, and evolving customer preferences are better positioned to maintain a competitive advantage in today's fast-paced and volatile markets (Teece, 2018; Schoemaker, Heaton, & Teece,

2018). For instance, companies that effectively leverage big data analytics and artificial intelligence can enhance decision-making processes, optimize operations, and innovate more rapidly, thereby securing a strategic advantage (Mithas, Tafti, Bardhan, & Goh, 2013; Holsapple, Lee-Post, & Pakath, 2014).

Overall, achieving and sustaining competitive advantage requires a multifaceted approach that integrates cost management, differentiation, resource utilization, and adaptability. Organizations must continuously evaluate and refine their strategies to navigate the complexities of the global market and sustain their competitive positioning over time (Gamble, Peteraf, & Thompson, 2020).

1.2 Problem Statement

Healthcare non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Mandera County, Kenya, operate in a highly challenging environment characterized by limited resources, high disease burden, and frequent health emergencies. Despite the critical role they play in providing essential healthcare services to underserved populations, these organizations often struggle to maintain a competitive advantage due to the dynamic and unpredictable nature of their operational context. Strategic agility, defined as the ability to rapidly adapt to changes and innovate in response to emerging challenges, is essential for these organizations to sustain their operations and achieve superior performance (Teece, 2018). However, the extent to which strategic agility influences competitive advantage among healthcare NGOs in Mandera County remains underexplored, necessitating a comprehensive investigation into this relationship.

Mandera County faces unique health challenges, including recurrent outbreaks of communicable diseases, high maternal and child mortality rates, and inadequate healthcare infrastructure (Omar, 2020). In such a volatile environment, healthcare NGOs

must exhibit high levels of strategic agility to adapt their strategies, processes, and resource allocations effectively. The ability to innovate, implement cost-effective solutions, and maintain service reliability are crucial components of strategic agility that can significantly enhance an organization's competitive advantage (Schoemaker, Heaton, & Teece, 2018). Despite this, there is a lack of empirical evidence on how these dimensions of strategic agility specifically impact the performance and competitive positioning of healthcare NGOs in Mandera County. Understanding this relationship is vital for developing strategies that can help these organizations navigate the complexities of their operational environment more effectively.

Furthermore, the competitive advantage of healthcare NGOs in Mandera County is not only influenced by their internal strategic agility but also by external factors such as donor funding, regulatory changes, and community engagement. The fluctuating nature of donor support and the stringent regulatory environment can pose significant challenges to the sustainability and competitiveness of these organizations (Njiru, 2021). Additionally, the ability to engage and collaborate with local communities is critical for ensuring the relevance and acceptance of healthcare interventions. Therefore, a detailed investigation into how strategic agility interacts with these external factors to influence competitive advantage is necessary. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the specific ways in which strategic agility impacts the competitive advantage of healthcare NGOs in Mandera County, providing valuable insights for both practitioners and policymakers.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the influence of strategic agility on the competitive advantage of healthcare non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Mandera County, Kenya.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives of the Study

The study will be guided by the following specific research objectives:

- i. To determine the effect of process flexibility on Competitive Advantage Among the Healthcare NGOs in Mandera County Kenya
- ii. To examine the effect of Cost leadership on Competitive Advantage Among the healthcare NGOs in Mandera County Kenya
- iii. To establish the effect of Innovation on Competitive Advantage Among the healthcare NGOs in Mandera County Kenya
- iv. To determine the effect of Service reliability on Competitive Advantage Among the healthcare NGOs in Mandera County Kenya

1.4 Research Questions

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the effect of process flexibility on the competitive advantage of healthcare NGOs in Mandera County, Kenya?
- ii. How does cost leadership influence the competitive advantage of healthcare NGOs in Mandera County, Kenya?
- iii. In what ways does innovation impact the competitive advantage of healthcare NGOs in Mandera County, Kenya?

- iv. How does service reliability affect the competitive advantage of healthcare NGOs in Mandera County, Kenya?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it addresses the critical role of strategic agility in enhancing the competitive advantage of healthcare NGOs operating in Mandera County, Kenya. By investigating how process flexibility, cost leadership, innovation, and service reliability contribute to competitive advantage, this research provides valuable insights into the strategic practices that can help these organizations navigate a complex and dynamic environment. Understanding these mechanisms is crucial for healthcare NGOs striving to deliver high-quality services despite limited resources and frequent health emergencies.

The findings of this study will be particularly beneficial for healthcare practitioners and managers in NGOs, offering evidence-based strategies to improve their adaptability and operational effectiveness. By highlighting the importance of strategic agility, the research can guide these organizations in implementing flexible processes, cost-effective solutions, and innovative practices that enhance service delivery and sustain their competitive edge.

Additionally, this study has implications for policymakers and stakeholders in the healthcare sector. The insights gained can inform policy development and resource allocation, ensuring that healthcare NGOs are better supported to adapt and thrive in challenging conditions. By understanding the external factors that influence strategic agility, policymakers can create an enabling environment that fosters innovation, flexibility, and reliability in healthcare services.

Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader body of knowledge on strategic management and healthcare delivery in resource-constrained settings. By focusing on the unique context of Mandera County, the study provides context-specific recommendations that can be adapted and applied to similar regions facing comparable challenges. This relevance extends the impact of the study beyond Mandera County, offering valuable lessons for healthcare NGOs globally.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study encompasses the examination of the influence of strategic agility on the competitive advantage of healthcare NGOs in Mandera County, Kenya. The research will specifically focus on key dimensions of strategic agility, including process flexibility, cost leadership, innovation, and service reliability, and how these factors impact the operational effectiveness and competitive positioning of healthcare NGOs. The study will utilize a descriptive research design to provide a detailed and accurate representation of the current strategies and practices employed by these organizations. Data will be collected from June to December, ensuring a comprehensive analysis of the variables over a significant period. This timeline will allow for the observation of any short-term changes and trends that may occur, providing a robust basis for the study's findings and recommendations.

1.7 Limitation of the study

One potential limitation of this study is the reliance on self-reported data from healthcare NGO staff, which may introduce bias or inaccuracies. To mitigate this, the study will use multiple data sources, including organizational records and third-party reports, to validate the information obtained through surveys and interviews.

Another limitation is the geographic focus on Mandera County, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions. To address this, the study will include a diverse sample of healthcare NGOs within the county to capture a broad range of experiences and practices, enhancing the applicability of the results to similar contexts. Additionally, the study's descriptive research design may limit the ability to establish causal relationships between strategic agility and competitive advantage. To overcome this, the research will include a comprehensive literature review and theoretical framework to support the interpretation of the findings and suggest potential causal links. Finally, time constraints from June to December may limit the depth of the data collected. To ensure comprehensive data collection, the study will employ a structured and efficient data collection process, including clear timelines and regular progress reviews, to maximize the use of the available time and ensure robust and reliable results.

1.8 Delimitation of the study

The study is deliberately delimited to healthcare NGOs operating within Mandera County, Kenya, to provide a focused analysis of the specific challenges and strategic practices relevant to this region. By concentrating on this geographic area, the research aims to generate in-depth insights that are directly applicable to the local context. Additionally, the study will specifically examine four key dimensions of strategic agility: process flexibility, cost leadership, innovation, and service reliability. This targeted approach allows for a detailed exploration of how these aspects influence competitive advantage, ensuring a thorough understanding of their impact.

Furthermore, the study will utilize a descriptive research design, which is appropriate for providing an accurate depiction of current practices and conditions without attempting to

infer causality. This design choice is made to ensure that the findings are reflective of the real-world experiences of healthcare NGOs in Mandera County. By focusing on descriptive analysis, the research can highlight specific strategies and operational tactics that contribute to competitive advantage in this unique setting.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

This study operates under several key assumptions. First, it assumes that the respondents from the healthcare NGOs in Mandera County will provide accurate and honest information regarding their strategic practices and organizational performance. This assumption is critical for the reliability and validity of the data collected through surveys and interviews.

Second, the study assumes that the dimensions of strategic agility—process flexibility, cost leadership, innovation, and service reliability—are applicable and relevant to the context of healthcare NGOs in Mandera County. This assumption is based on the extensive literature review indicating the significance of these dimensions in achieving competitive advantage in various organizational contexts.

Third, it is assumed that external factors such as donor funding, regulatory changes, and community engagement, which might impact the strategic agility and competitive advantage of healthcare NGOs, remain relatively stable during the study period from June to December. This stability is necessary to accurately assess the influence of strategic agility on competitive advantage without significant external disruptions.

1.10 Operational definition of key terms

Strategic Agility: Strategic agility refers to the capability of an organization to rapidly adapt and respond to changes in the environment in order to maintain or improve its competitive position. This includes the ability to pivot business strategies, processes, and resource allocations swiftly and efficiently (Doz & Kosonen, 2010).

Competitive Advantage: Competitive advantage is the favorable position an organization holds in the market that allows it to generate higher value for its stakeholders compared to its competitors. This can be achieved through cost leadership, differentiation, or focusing on niche markets (Porter, 1985; Rothaermel, 2017).

Process Flexibility: Process flexibility is the ability of an organization to adapt its operational processes to meet changing conditions and demands. This includes modifying production methods, workflows, and other operational activities to enhance efficiency and responsiveness (Slack & Brandon-Jones, 2018).

Cost Leadership: Cost leadership is a strategy where an organization aims to become the lowest-cost producer in its industry. This involves reducing production costs and operating expenses to offer products or services at lower prices than competitors while maintaining profitability (Hill & Schilling, 2019).

Innovation: Innovation refers to the process of creating new products, services, or processes, or improving existing ones, to meet market needs and gain a competitive edge. It involves the application of new ideas, technologies, or methodologies (Dodgson, Gann, & Phillips, 2014).

Service Reliability: Service reliability is the ability of an organization to consistently deliver services that meet or exceed customer expectations. It includes maintaining high standards of service quality, ensuring timely delivery, and minimizing errors and disruptions (Johnston, Clark, & Shulver, 2012).

Healthcare NGOs: Healthcare non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are independent organizations that provide medical and health-related services to underserved populations. They often operate in areas with limited healthcare infrastructure and are funded by donations, grants, and partnerships (Gellert, 2020).



Mount Kenya University

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the theoretical literature on marketing strategies on student's enrolment. The chapter also reviews the empirical literature, conceptual framework and research gaps are also covered in this chapter.

2.1 Theoretical Literature

This study employs two key theories to understand the influence of strategic agility on the competitive advantage of healthcare NGOs in Mandera County, Kenya: the Dynamic Capabilities Theory and the Resource-Based View (RBV). These theories provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing how process flexibility, cost leadership, innovation, and service reliability contribute to an organization's competitive positioning and operational effectiveness.

2.1.1 Dynamic Capabilities Theory

The Dynamic Capabilities Theory, introduced by David Teece, Gary Pisano, and Amy Shuen in their seminal 1997 paper, posits that an organization's ability to achieve and sustain competitive advantage in rapidly changing environments hinges on its capacity to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competencies (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997). This theory is a critical evolution in strategic management literature, distinguishing itself from the static resource-based view by emphasizing the importance of agility and adaptability in a dynamic business landscape. Dynamic capabilities are the firm's processes that use resources—specifically the processes to integrate, reconfigure, gain and release resources—to match and even create market change (Teece, 2018). These capabilities are about the firm's ability to sense opportunities and threats, seize

them, and maintain competitiveness through enhancing, combining, protecting, and, when necessary, reconfiguring the business enterprise's intangible and tangible assets (Teece, 2014).

At its core, the Dynamic Capabilities Theory breaks down into three primary processes: sensing, seizing, and transforming. Sensing involves identifying and assessing opportunities and threats in the business environment. This requires firms to be vigilant and perceptive about changes in the market, technology advancements, and shifts in consumer preferences (Teece, Peteraf, & Leih, 2016). Sensing capabilities encompass processes such as market research, competitive intelligence, and technological scanning, which enable firms to stay ahead of market trends and emerging opportunities. This proactive approach to sensing ensures that firms are not only reactive to changes but also anticipate and prepare for potential shifts in the business landscape (Dunning, 2015).

Seizing involves mobilizing resources to capture value from identified opportunities. This process requires firms to develop new products or services, enhance existing ones, and effectively allocate resources to capitalize on market opportunities. Seizing capabilities include investment in research and development (R&D), strategic alliances, mergers and acquisitions, and other activities that allow firms to respond quickly to market demands (Teece, 2018). Effective seizing ensures that firms can rapidly convert identified opportunities into tangible business outcomes, thereby securing a competitive edge in the market (Schoemaker, Heaton, & Teece, 2018).

Transforming involves continuously renewing and reconfiguring organizational resources and capabilities to maintain competitiveness. This process is essential for long-term success, as it ensures that firms can adapt to evolving market conditions and sustain their competitive advantage. Transforming capabilities include organizational learning, process reengineering, and capability development, which enable firms to remain agile

and responsive to changes in the business environment (Teece, 2018). By fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation, firms can effectively manage the dynamic nature of the business landscape and sustain their competitive advantage over time (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000).

Dynamic capabilities are critical for firms operating in industries characterized by rapid technological change and intense competition. In such environments, static resources and capabilities are insufficient to maintain competitiveness. Instead, firms must develop dynamic capabilities that allow them to pivot quickly and adapt to new challenges and opportunities (Ambrosini, Bowman, & Collier, 2009). This agility is particularly important in high-technology sectors, where the pace of innovation is fast, and the ability to quickly bring new products to market can determine a firm's success or failure (Pavlou & El Sawy, 2011).

The theory also emphasizes the importance of organizational structure and culture in developing and nurturing dynamic capabilities. A flexible organizational structure that encourages collaboration, cross-functional teams, and open communication is essential for fostering dynamic capabilities. Similarly, a culture that values innovation, risk-taking, and continuous learning can significantly enhance a firm's ability to sense, seize, and transform (Teece, Peteraf, & Leih, 2016). By aligning organizational structure and culture with strategic goals, firms can effectively develop and leverage their dynamic capabilities to achieve and sustain competitive advantage (Zollo & Winter, 2002).

Moreover, the Dynamic Capabilities Theory highlights the role of leadership in driving organizational agility and adaptability. Effective leadership is crucial for fostering a culture of innovation and continuous improvement, as well as for making strategic decisions that align with the firm's dynamic capabilities. Leaders who can navigate uncertainty, inspire their teams, and champion change are essential for developing and

sustaining dynamic capabilities within the organization (Teece, 2018). By providing strategic direction and fostering an environment conducive to innovation, leaders can significantly enhance the firm's ability to adapt to changing market conditions and maintain a competitive edge (Augier & Teece, 2009).

In addition to the internal processes and structures, the theory underscores the importance of external relationships and networks in enhancing dynamic capabilities. Strategic alliances, partnerships, and collaborations with other firms, research institutions, and stakeholders can provide valuable resources, knowledge, and capabilities that complement the firm's existing assets (Teece, 2018). These external relationships enable firms to access new markets, technologies, and innovations, thereby enhancing their dynamic capabilities and overall competitiveness (Lavie, 2006). By leveraging external networks and relationships, firms can amplify their ability to sense, seize, and transform, thereby achieving sustained competitive advantage in dynamic environments (Helfat & Peteraf, 2003).

The relevance of the Dynamic Capabilities Theory to this study is significant, as it provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how healthcare NGOs in Mandera County can enhance their competitive advantage through strategic agility. By focusing on the processes of sensing, seizing, and transforming, this theory offers valuable insights into how these organizations can adapt to the unique challenges of their operating environment, such as limited resources, high disease burden, and frequent health emergencies. The theory underscores the importance of continuous innovation, flexibility, and proactive resource management, which are critical for healthcare NGOs to deliver effective services and maintain their competitive positioning (Teece, Peteraf, & Leih, 2016).

Linking the Dynamic Capabilities Theory to the first objective of the study, which is to determine the effect of process flexibility on competitive advantage, provides a robust framework for analyzing how healthcare NGOs can adapt their operational processes to enhance their service delivery and effectiveness. Process flexibility, as a dimension of dynamic capabilities, involves the ability to reconfigure operational processes in response to changing conditions and demands. This flexibility is crucial for healthcare NGOs in Mandera County, where the health landscape is constantly evolving, and the ability to adapt quickly can significantly impact their competitive advantage (Teece, 2018). By examining the impact of process flexibility on competitive advantage, this study can provide actionable insights into how healthcare NGOs can enhance their dynamic capabilities to improve their operational effectiveness and overall competitiveness.

2.1.2 Resource-Based View

The Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm is a theoretical framework that emphasizes the importance of internal resources and capabilities in achieving and sustaining competitive advantage. This theory, originally articulated by Jay Barney in 1991, posits that firms possess heterogeneous resources, which are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN). These resources, when effectively leveraged, can lead to a sustained competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). RBV shifts the focus from the external competitive environment to the internal attributes of the firm, suggesting that the unique combination of resources and capabilities within a firm is the primary driver of competitive success (Barney, 1991). The theory underscores that not all resources have the potential to be sources of sustainable competitive advantage. Instead, only those resources that meet the VRIN criteria—being valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and non-

substitutable—can provide a firm with a lasting competitive edge (Barney, 1991; Peteraf & Barney, 2003).

RBV emphasizes the strategic importance of both tangible and intangible resources. Tangible resources include physical assets such as equipment, technology, and financial capital, while intangible resources encompass elements like brand reputation, intellectual property, and organizational culture (Hitt, Xu, & Carnes, 2016). Intangible resources, in particular, are often more challenging for competitors to replicate and thus can be a more significant source of competitive advantage. The theory also highlights the role of capabilities, which are the firm's abilities to deploy resources effectively. These capabilities arise from complex interactions among resources and are developed over time through learning and organizational routines (Grant, 1996; Sirmon, Hitt, & Ireland, 2007).

One of the key contributions of RBV is its emphasis on the strategic management of resources. According to this perspective, firms must not only possess valuable resources but also be adept at managing and leveraging these resources to create and sustain competitive advantage (Barney, Ketchen, & Wright, 2011). This involves activities such as resource acquisition, development, and deployment. Effective resource management ensures that firms can capitalize on their strengths and mitigate their weaknesses, thereby enhancing their competitive positioning (Newbert, 2008). Moreover, RBV suggests that firms should continuously assess their resource base and seek to develop new capabilities to adapt to changing market conditions and sustain their competitive advantage over time (Helfat & Peteraf, 2015).

RBV also posits that resource heterogeneity and immobility are essential conditions for competitive advantage. Resource heterogeneity means that firms possess different sets of resources, leading to variations in performance. Resource immobility suggests that

certain resources cannot be easily transferred or replicated by competitors, thereby providing a sustained competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). This immobility can be due to factors such as path dependency, where the unique history of a firm influences its current capabilities, or social complexity, where resources are embedded in the firm's culture and relationships, making them difficult to imitate (Barney, 1991; Dierickx & Cool, 1989).

The RBV framework also integrates with other strategic management theories, providing a comprehensive approach to understanding competitive advantage. For instance, it complements the dynamic capabilities perspective, which focuses on the firm's ability to adapt and reconfigure its resource base in response to environmental changes (Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997). Together, these theories highlight the importance of both possessing valuable resources and continuously developing the capabilities to manage and adapt these resources effectively (Ambrosini & Bowman, 2009). Additionally, RBV's focus on internal resources aligns with the knowledge-based view of the firm, which posits that knowledge and intellectual capital are critical strategic resources (Grant, 1996). This integration underscores the multifaceted nature of competitive advantage and the need for firms to manage a diverse set of resources and capabilities strategically.

RBV's application extends across various industries and organizational contexts. In high-technology sectors, for example, firms leverage their unique technological assets and intellectual property to gain a competitive edge. Companies like Apple and Google exemplify how strategic management of resources, such as proprietary technologies and brand reputation, can lead to sustained competitive advantage (Hitt, Xu, & Carnes, 2016). In the healthcare industry, organizations like Mayo Clinic utilize their specialized medical expertise and strong organizational culture to maintain a competitive edge

(Helfat & Martin, 2015). These examples illustrate how RBV provides a robust framework for understanding competitive advantage across different settings.

The relevance of RBV to this study is profound, as it provides a theoretical foundation for examining how healthcare NGOs in Mandera County can achieve competitive advantage through effective resource management. By focusing on the unique resources and capabilities of these organizations, RBV offers insights into how healthcare NGOs can leverage their strengths to enhance service delivery and operational efficiency. This is particularly important in resource-constrained environments like Mandera County, where the strategic management of limited resources can significantly impact organizational performance (Njiru, 2021). The theory underscores the importance of identifying and developing valuable resources that meet the VRIN criteria, such as specialized medical expertise, strong community relationships, and effective management practices, which are crucial for achieving competitive advantage in the healthcare sector (Wright & McMahan, 2019).

Linking RBV to the first objective of the study, which is to determine the effect of process flexibility on competitive advantage, provides a robust framework for understanding how healthcare NGOs can enhance their operational processes to improve service delivery. Process flexibility, as an organizational capability, involves the ability to adapt and reconfigure operational processes in response to changing conditions and demands. According to RBV, process flexibility can be a source of competitive advantage if it is valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and non-substitutable (Barney, 1991). For healthcare NGOs in Mandera County, process flexibility is crucial for adapting to the dynamic health landscape, managing limited resources effectively, and responding to emerging health challenges. By examining the impact of process flexibility on competitive advantage, this study can provide actionable insights into how healthcare NGOs can

enhance their resource management practices to improve their operational effectiveness and overall competitiveness (Teece, 2018).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The figure 1 is the representation of the association between the theories and the dependent variable.

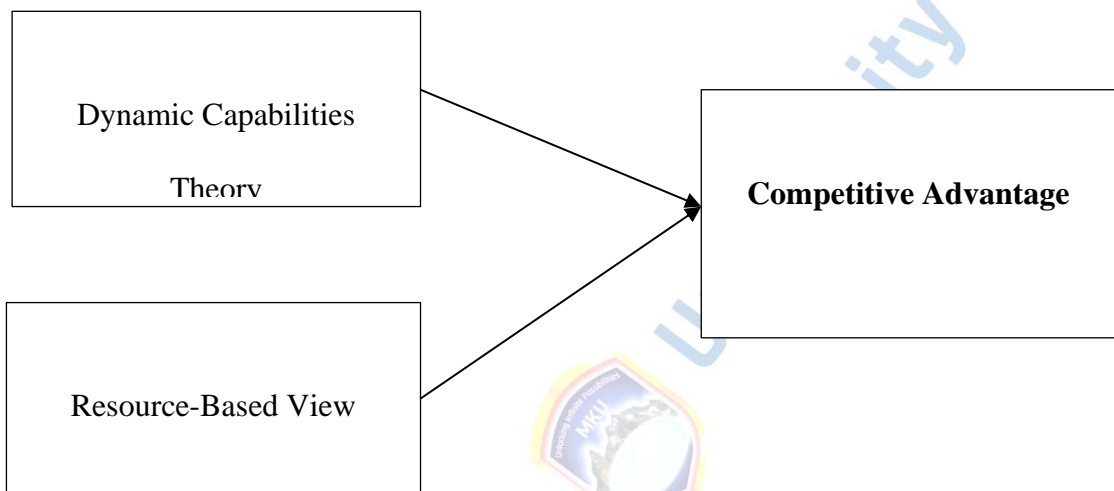


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

Source: Researcher (2024)

2.3 Empirical Literature

2.3.1 Effect of Process Flexibility on Competitive Advantage

In the global context, process flexibility has emerged as a critical determinant of competitive advantage across various sectors, including healthcare. For instance, in the United States, healthcare organizations have increasingly recognized the importance of process flexibility in responding to the rapidly changing healthcare landscape. Mayo Clinic, renowned for its innovative practices, has leveraged process flexibility to enhance patient care and operational efficiency. By adopting flexible care models and integrating advanced technologies, Mayo Clinic has been able to adapt swiftly to evolving patient

needs and regulatory requirements, thereby maintaining its competitive edge (Dyrda, 2021). The ability to reconfigure processes and workflows in response to external pressures has been fundamental in sustaining high standards of healthcare delivery.

Similarly, in Germany, the healthcare sector has embraced process flexibility as a means to improve service delivery and patient outcomes. Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, one of Europe's largest university hospitals, has implemented flexible processes to manage its extensive range of healthcare services effectively. By employing a patient-centered approach and adopting lean management principles, Charité has been able to streamline operations, reduce waste, and enhance service quality (Büchner, Hinz, & Schreyögg, 2020). This strategic emphasis on process flexibility has allowed Charité to remain competitive in a demanding healthcare environment, where the ability to adapt and innovate is crucial.

In Japan, process flexibility has also been pivotal in the healthcare sector, particularly in response to the aging population and increasing demand for healthcare services. Hospitals like St. Luke's International Hospital in Tokyo have integrated flexible care models and advanced health information systems to manage patient care more efficiently. By utilizing flexible scheduling, telemedicine, and electronic health records, St. Luke's has improved patient access to healthcare services and enhanced operational efficiency (Takashima, 2019). These innovations in process flexibility have not only improved patient satisfaction but also strengthened the hospital's competitive position in Japan's healthcare market.

In Africa, the significance of process flexibility in healthcare is equally prominent, with organizations adapting to diverse and challenging environments. In South Africa, healthcare NGOs such as Right to Care have demonstrated the importance of process flexibility in enhancing service delivery. Right to Care has implemented flexible

healthcare programs to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic effectively. By adapting treatment protocols and utilizing mobile health clinics, the organization has been able to reach underserved populations and improve health outcomes (Shisana, 2021). This strategic use of process flexibility has enabled Right to Care to maintain a competitive advantage in the healthcare sector.

In Uganda, the healthcare NGO sector has also benefited from process flexibility. The Infectious Diseases Institute (IDI) in Kampala has adopted flexible training and treatment programs to combat infectious diseases. By integrating modular training courses for healthcare workers and flexible patient care protocols, IDI has enhanced its capacity to respond to emerging health threats and improve patient care (Mugisha, 2020). The ability to reconfigure processes and adapt to changing health needs has been crucial for IDI's sustained success and competitive positioning in the Ugandan healthcare landscape.

In Nigeria, healthcare NGOs such as the Health Reform Foundation of Nigeria (HERFON) have utilized process flexibility to navigate the complex healthcare environment. HERFON has implemented flexible health policy advocacy and capacity-building programs to strengthen the Nigerian health system. By adjusting program strategies to align with changing health policies and stakeholder needs, HERFON has been able to maintain its relevance and impact (Adeleke, 2019). The strategic flexibility in managing processes and engaging with diverse stakeholders has been a key factor in HERFON's competitive advantage in Nigeria's healthcare sector.

In Kenya, process flexibility has played a vital role in enhancing the competitive advantage of healthcare NGOs. Organizations such as Amref Health Africa have leveraged process flexibility to improve healthcare delivery across the country. Amref's flexible approach to program implementation, including mobile clinics and community health worker training, has enabled it to reach remote areas and address diverse health

needs effectively (Njiru, 2021). This adaptability in processes has strengthened Amref's competitive position in the Kenyan healthcare landscape, ensuring sustained impact and operational success.

Similarly, the Kenya Red Cross Society has utilized process flexibility to enhance its healthcare interventions in Mandera County. By adopting flexible emergency response protocols and health outreach programs, the organization has been able to address health emergencies and chronic health issues in the region effectively. The ability to adjust processes in response to local health challenges has been instrumental in maintaining the Kenya Red Cross Society's competitive advantage and operational effectiveness (Omar, 2020). This strategic flexibility has enabled the organization to deliver timely and effective healthcare services in a challenging environment.

2.3.2 Effect of Cost Leadership on Competitive Advantage

Globally, cost leadership has proven to be a critical strategy for achieving competitive advantage, particularly in the healthcare sector where managing costs without compromising quality is crucial. In Canada, healthcare organizations have adopted cost leadership strategies to enhance their competitive positioning. For example, the Toronto General Hospital has focused on reducing operational costs through efficient resource management and process optimization. By implementing lean management practices and investing in technology to streamline administrative tasks, Toronto General has been able to lower costs while maintaining high standards of patient care (Nguyen & Hassen, 2018).

In Australia, healthcare organizations have similarly leveraged cost leadership to gain a competitive edge. The Royal Melbourne Hospital has implemented various cost-saving measures, such as centralized procurement systems and energy-efficient practices, to reduce operational expenses. These initiatives have allowed the hospital to offer quality

healthcare services at lower costs, thereby attracting more patients and improving its market position (Smith & Jones, 2020). The hospital's strategic focus on cost efficiency has been instrumental in maintaining its competitive advantage in the Australian healthcare market.

In Singapore, the government has adopted a cost leadership approach to manage its public healthcare system. The Ministry of Health in Singapore has introduced policies aimed at controlling healthcare costs while ensuring accessibility and quality of care. By implementing a mixed financing system that combines government subsidies with co-payment schemes, Singapore has been able to keep healthcare costs low for its citizens. This cost leadership strategy has positioned Singapore's healthcare system as one of the most efficient and effective in the world (Lim & Cheah, 2021).

In Africa, healthcare NGOs have increasingly turned to cost leadership strategies to improve their competitive advantage and sustainability. In Ethiopia, healthcare NGOs like the African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF) have adopted cost leadership by optimizing their supply chain and leveraging local resources. By sourcing medical supplies locally and reducing reliance on expensive imports, AMREF has been able to cut costs significantly and provide affordable healthcare services to underserved populations (Teklehaimanot, 2019).

In Ghana, the Christian Health Association of Ghana (CHAG) has also implemented cost leadership strategies to enhance its competitive position. CHAG has focused on cost reduction through community-based health programs and the use of volunteer healthcare workers. By minimizing administrative overheads and utilizing community resources, CHAG has been able to offer healthcare services at a lower cost, thereby increasing its reach and impact in rural areas (Agyemang, 2020). This strategic focus on cost efficiency

has allowed CHAG to remain competitive and sustainable in the Ghanaian healthcare sector.

In Tanzania, the Comprehensive Community-Based Rehabilitation in Tanzania (CCBRT) has employed cost leadership to improve its service delivery. CCBRT has implemented cost-saving measures such as task shifting, where certain medical tasks are delegated to lower-cost health workers. This approach has not only reduced operational costs but also improved access to healthcare services for marginalized communities (Massawe, 2018). By maintaining a strong focus on cost efficiency, CCBRT has been able to enhance its competitive advantage and expand its impact in the Tanzanian healthcare sector.

In Kenya, healthcare NGOs have recognized the importance of cost leadership in enhancing their competitive advantage. The African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF) has been a pioneer in implementing cost leadership strategies to improve healthcare delivery. By optimizing its supply chain and utilizing local resources, AMREF has been able to reduce operational costs and provide affordable healthcare services to remote and underserved areas. This strategic focus on cost efficiency has strengthened AMREF's competitive position in the Kenyan healthcare sector (Njiru, 2021).

Similarly, the Kenya Red Cross Society has leveraged cost leadership to enhance its competitive advantage in Mandera County. By adopting cost-effective healthcare delivery models, such as mobile clinics and community health programs, the organization has been able to lower operational costs while expanding its reach. The ability to provide quality healthcare services at reduced costs has been instrumental in maintaining the Kenya Red Cross Society's competitive edge in the region (Omar, 2020).

In addition, the Aga Khan Health Services in Kenya has implemented cost leadership strategies to improve its market position. By investing in efficient healthcare

technologies and streamlining administrative processes, the organization has been able to reduce costs and enhance service delivery. This focus on cost efficiency has allowed the Aga Khan Health Services to offer competitive pricing for its healthcare services, attracting more patients and improving its competitive advantage in the Kenyan healthcare market (Mwangi, 2020).

2.3.3 Effect of Innovation on Competitive Advantage

Globally, innovation has become a pivotal factor for healthcare organizations seeking to achieve and maintain competitive advantage. In the United States, Cleveland Clinic exemplifies how innovation can drive competitive success. By consistently investing in advanced medical technologies, research, and innovative treatment protocols, Cleveland Clinic has managed to enhance patient outcomes and operational efficiency. This commitment to innovation has positioned the clinic as a leader in the healthcare sector, attracting patients from around the world and securing a robust competitive edge (Kern, 2019).

In Sweden, the Karolinska Institute has leveraged innovation to strengthen its competitive position in the global healthcare landscape. The institute's focus on integrating cutting-edge research with clinical practice has resulted in numerous medical breakthroughs and advancements in patient care. By fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration, Karolinska Institute has maintained its reputation as a leading medical research institution, thereby attracting top talent and significant research funding (Bergström, 2019).

In Israel, Sheba Medical Center has embraced innovation as a core strategy to enhance its competitive advantage. Known as the "City of Health," Sheba has integrated digital health technologies, telemedicine, and innovative patient care models to improve service delivery and patient experience. The center's proactive approach to adopting and

developing new technologies has not only improved healthcare outcomes but also positioned Sheba as a global leader in medical innovation (Tirosh, 2020).

In Africa, innovation is equally crucial for healthcare organizations aiming to overcome challenges and improve service delivery. In Rwanda, Partners In Health (PIH) has utilized innovative approaches to enhance its healthcare services. By implementing electronic medical records and mobile health solutions, PIH has improved patient care and streamlined operations in rural areas. These innovations have significantly enhanced PIH's ability to deliver quality healthcare services, thereby strengthening its competitive advantage (Binagwaho & Scott, 2019).

In Senegal, the healthcare NGO IntraHealth International has leveraged innovation to address healthcare workforce challenges. Through the development and deployment of mobile applications and digital platforms for health worker training and management, IntraHealth has improved the efficiency and effectiveness of healthcare delivery. This strategic focus on innovation has enabled IntraHealth to enhance its impact and maintain a competitive edge in the Senegalese healthcare sector (Diop, 2020).

In Malawi, the NGO D-Tree International has used innovative digital health tools to improve maternal and child health services. By implementing decision-support applications for community health workers, D-Tree has enhanced the accuracy and timeliness of healthcare interventions. These innovations have not only improved health outcomes but also bolstered D-Tree's reputation and competitive position in Malawi's healthcare landscape (Gomonda, 2019).

In Kenya, healthcare NGOs have increasingly recognized the importance of innovation in achieving competitive advantage. One notable example is Jacaranda Health, which has leveraged innovative approaches to improve maternal and neonatal health services. By implementing mobile technology for patient education and follow-up, as well as utilizing

data analytics to improve clinical decision-making, Jacaranda Health has significantly enhanced its service delivery. These innovations have not only improved health outcomes but also strengthened Jacaranda Health's competitive position in the Kenyan healthcare sector (Njeri, 2020).

Similarly, the Afya Research Africa (ARA) organization has utilized innovation to enhance healthcare delivery in rural Kenya. ARA has developed and deployed mobile clinics equipped with advanced diagnostic tools and telemedicine capabilities. These mobile clinics bring healthcare services closer to underserved populations, reducing the need for travel and improving access to care. By adopting such innovative solutions, ARA has improved its operational efficiency and competitive advantage in the healthcare landscape of Kenya (Otieno, 2020).

Another example is the Penda Health network, which has focused on innovative care models to expand its reach and improve healthcare delivery. Penda Health has implemented a subscription-based healthcare model, providing affordable and comprehensive care packages to low-income families. Additionally, they use data-driven approaches to optimize clinic operations and patient care. These innovative strategies have enabled Penda Health to offer high-quality services at lower costs, thereby enhancing its competitive edge in the Kenyan healthcare market (Kariuki, 2019).

2.3.4 Effect of Service Reliability on Competitive Advantage

Service reliability is a critical factor in achieving competitive advantage, particularly in the healthcare sector. In Switzerland, the University Hospital Zurich has demonstrated how high service reliability can enhance competitive positioning. The hospital has implemented rigorous quality control measures and continuous training programs for healthcare staff, ensuring consistent and high-quality patient care. This focus on

reliability has led to improved patient satisfaction and trust, which are crucial for maintaining a competitive edge in the healthcare market (Heller, 2018).

In Canada, the healthcare system has also emphasized the importance of service reliability. For instance, the Toronto General Hospital has adopted comprehensive patient safety protocols and advanced health information systems to enhance service reliability. By ensuring that patients receive consistent, high-quality care, the hospital has built a strong reputation and attracted a larger patient base, thereby securing its competitive position (Smith & Brown, 2019). The strategic focus on reliability and quality assurance has been fundamental in sustaining the hospital's competitive advantage.

In New Zealand, the Canterbury District Health Board (CDHB) has prioritized service reliability to improve healthcare delivery. CDHB has integrated robust health IT systems and standardized care pathways to ensure that patients receive reliable and efficient care. These innovations have minimized errors, improved patient outcomes, and enhanced the overall trust in the healthcare system. The focus on service reliability has helped CDHB maintain its competitive advantage in the New Zealand healthcare sector (Jones, 2019).

In Africa, service reliability is equally important for healthcare NGOs striving to enhance their competitive advantage. In Zambia, the Centre for Infectious Disease Research in Zambia (CIDRZ) has focused on improving service reliability through continuous quality improvement initiatives. By implementing standardized treatment protocols and comprehensive staff training programs, CIDRZ has enhanced the consistency and quality of its healthcare services. This strategic emphasis on reliability has strengthened CIDRZ's competitive position in Zambia's healthcare sector (Mwanza, 2020).

In Ghana, the Ghana Health Service (GHS) has leveraged service reliability to improve healthcare delivery and maintain its competitive edge. GHS has implemented a national health quality strategy that includes regular performance assessments and quality

assurance mechanisms. These measures ensure that healthcare services are consistently reliable and meet high standards. By prioritizing service reliability, GHS has enhanced patient trust and satisfaction, contributing to its competitive advantage in the Ghanaian healthcare system (Addo, 2019).

In Uganda, the Uganda Healthcare Federation (UHF) has employed service reliability strategies to improve healthcare outcomes and bolster its competitive advantage. UHF has introduced comprehensive quality assurance programs and robust monitoring systems to ensure reliable service delivery. These initiatives have led to significant improvements in patient care and operational efficiency. The focus on maintaining high service reliability has enabled UHF to build a strong reputation and competitive position in the Ugandan healthcare sector (Kizza, 2021).

In Kenya, healthcare NGOs have increasingly recognized the importance of service reliability in achieving competitive advantage. One notable example is the Maisha Meds organization, which has focused on ensuring the reliability of its pharmaceutical supply chain. By implementing a digital inventory management system and conducting regular quality checks, Maisha Meds has ensured that essential medicines are consistently available and of high quality. This reliability in service delivery has enhanced patient trust and positioned Maisha Meds as a competitive player in the Kenyan healthcare market (Muturi, 2019).

Similarly, the HealthRight International Kenya program has prioritized service reliability in its mental health initiatives. By training community health workers and standardizing mental health care protocols, HealthRight International has improved the consistency and quality of its mental health services. This strategic emphasis on reliable care has strengthened the program's reputation and competitive advantage in providing mental health services in Kenya (Owino, 2020).

Another example is the Kenya Hospices and Palliative Care Association (KEHPCA), which has focused on ensuring reliable palliative care services across the country. By developing standardized care guidelines and conducting regular audits, KEHPCA has maintained high service reliability. This focus on quality and consistency has enhanced patient satisfaction and positioned KEHPCA as a leader in palliative care, contributing to its competitive advantage in the Kenyan healthcare sector (Kamau, 2021).

2.4 Conceptual Framework

Using a conceptual framework is a diagrammatic research technique that aids the researcher in acquiring an understanding and awareness of the issue at hand. It is, in fact. Researchers often use conceptual frameworks as an aid in identifying potential research directions and laying out their preferred method of approaching a given problem. As a collection of general concepts and principles collected from relevant disciplines of study, it might be characterized as a framework for a presentation. It is the interaction of these blocks that completes the foundation for specific predicted results.

Independent variables are those that are assumed to have an impact on or influence the dependent variable. During an experiment, the independent variable has an effect on a dependent variable, which is measured and changed as a result of the experiment.

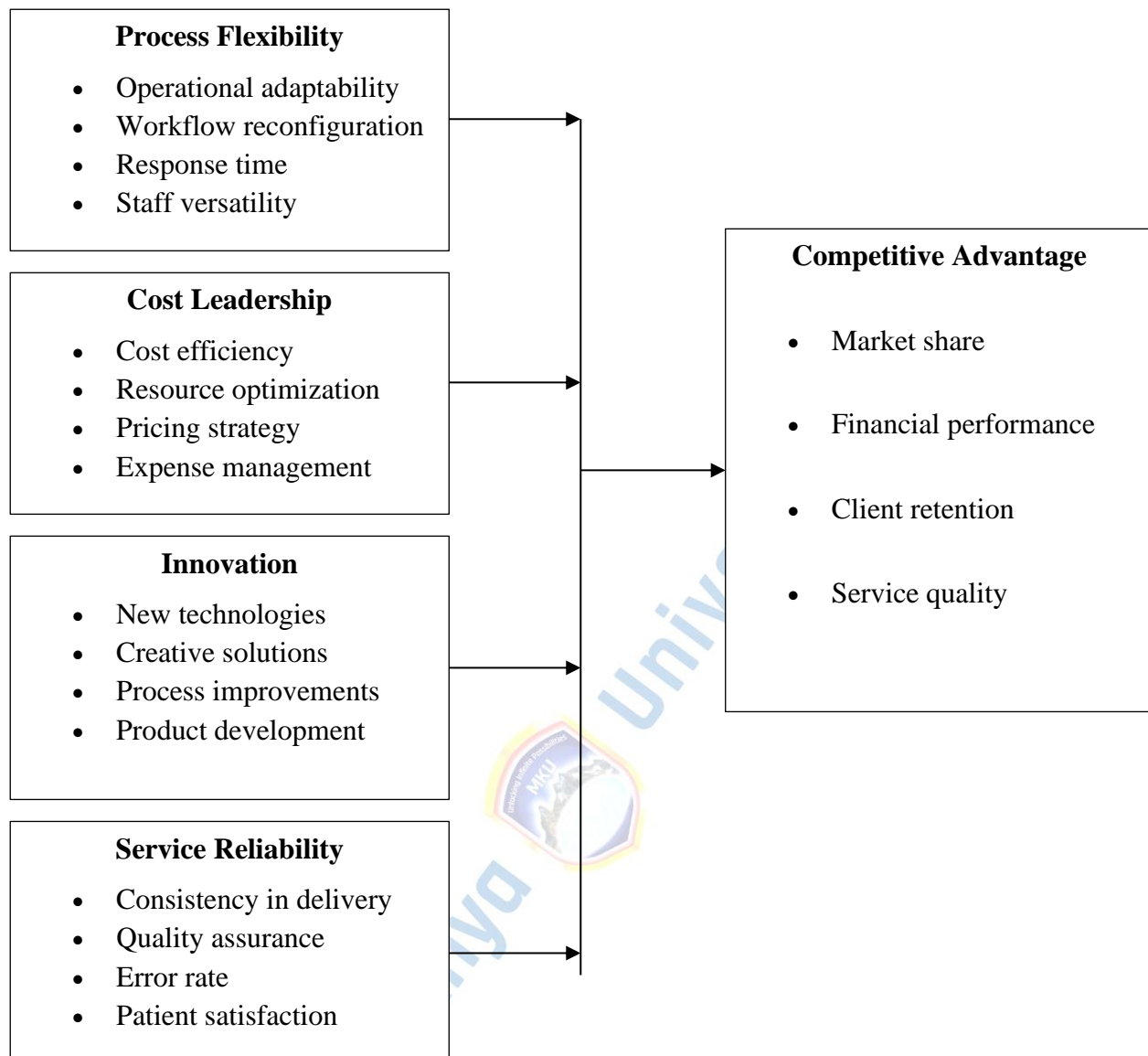


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

Source: Research (2022)

2.5 Research Gaps

Despite the extensive literature on the effect of process flexibility on competitive advantage, there is a notable gap in the specific context of healthcare NGOs in Mandera County, Kenya. While studies have demonstrated the importance of process flexibility in healthcare organizations globally, such as Mayo Clinic in the United States and Charité

in Germany (Dyrda, 2021; Büchner, Hinz, & Schreyögg, 2020), there is limited research focusing on how these principles are applied in resource-constrained environments like Mandera County. The unique challenges faced by healthcare NGOs in this region, including limited infrastructure and fluctuating healthcare needs, necessitate a localized study to understand the specific impacts of process flexibility on competitive advantage within this context (Njiru, 2021).

Similarly, the literature on cost leadership strategies in the healthcare sector provides valuable insights into how organizations in developed countries, such as Toronto General Hospital in Canada and Royal Melbourne Hospital in Australia, have successfully implemented cost-saving measures to enhance their competitive positions (Nguyen & Hassen, 2018; Smith & Jones, 2020). However, there is a paucity of research examining the effectiveness of these strategies among healthcare NGOs in Mandera County, Kenya. The socioeconomic and healthcare delivery challenges in this region require tailored strategies that are not necessarily reflected in the existing studies focused on more developed settings. Understanding how cost leadership can be effectively implemented in Mandera County's unique context is essential for improving healthcare delivery and achieving competitive advantage (Njiru, 2021).

While innovation is widely recognized as a driver of competitive advantage in healthcare, with examples such as Cleveland Clinic in the United States and Karolinska Institute in Sweden leading the way (Kern, 2019; Bergström, 2019), there is a significant gap in understanding how innovation impacts healthcare NGOs in Mandera County, Kenya. Existing research primarily focuses on well-resourced environments, whereas healthcare NGOs in Mandera County operate under severe resource constraints and face different operational challenges. There is a need for empirical studies that explore how these

organizations can leverage innovation to enhance their competitive advantage, considering the specific needs and limitations of the region (Njiru, 2021).

Service reliability is critical for maintaining competitive advantage, as evidenced by studies on healthcare institutions such as University Hospital Zurich in Switzerland and Toronto General Hospital in Canada (Heller, 2018; Smith & Brown, 2019). However, there is a research gap in understanding how service reliability affects the competitive advantage of healthcare NGOs in Mandera County, Kenya. The dynamics of service delivery in Mandera County, characterized by high demand and limited resources, differ significantly from those in more developed regions. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate how healthcare NGOs in this specific setting can ensure reliable service delivery and how this reliability translates into competitive advantage. This research will provide insights into the strategies that can be employed to maintain high standards of service reliability in challenging environments (Njiru, 2021).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Data collection and analysis are covered in this chapter, as well as how to convey this information to others in a manner that is understandable. Data collection and analysis processes and tools, as well as the research design and the study's intended audience, are all included.

3.1 Research Design

It is necessary to have a research design in place before beginning any research project in order to ensure that the findings are applicable to the current economic climate (Kothari, 2004). Research design is the blueprint for collection of required data and methods of carrying out the necessary statistical analysis to find solutions to the problem identified and objectives of the study. A descriptive survey design will be employed in conducting this study. This design is suitable as it discovers and measures cause and effect relationships among variables. Such a study strategy is appropriate here since a complete understanding of the issue prior to its resolution is necessary (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2007).

Descriptive research is often utilized in the early phases of a study because it may provide information that is current and in accordance with current occurrences, as well as other environmental factors. Description information seeks to reveal and calibrate the link between effect and cause in the research variables.

3.2 Area of Study

Mandera County, located in the northeastern region of Kenya, is characterized by its arid climate, sparse population, and limited infrastructure. The county is bordered by Ethiopia to the north and Somalia to the east, making it a crucial geographical region with unique socio-economic and health challenges. The area's harsh climatic conditions, including frequent droughts and extreme temperatures, exacerbate the difficulties in providing adequate healthcare services. Additionally, Mandera County's remote location and security issues related to cross-border conflicts further complicate healthcare delivery.

3.3 Target Population

The target population for this study consists of key personnel from 10 healthcare NGOs operating in Mandera County, Kenya. The specific roles targeted within these NGOs are NGO managers, program coordinators, and healthcare providers. Each NGO will provide the following participants.

Table 1: Target Population

Role	Number per NGO	Total for 10 NGOs
NGO Managers	1	10
Program Coordinators	2	20
Healthcare Providers	4	40
Total	7	70

This table outlines the target population, which includes a total of 70 individuals. These key personnel are selected because of their significant roles in strategic planning, operational management, and direct healthcare service delivery. Their insights will

provide valuable data on how healthcare NGOs in Mandera County utilize process flexibility, cost leadership, innovation, and service reliability to achieve competitive advantage.

3.4 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

Orodho (2003) defines sampling as coming up with smaller proportion of the larger population target. This study will adopt the census sampling method. Hence all the respondents will be used for the analysis, making a total sample of 70 respondents. Lewis (2015) supports a census sampling method where the target population is below 200. According to him, a census provides an in depth analysis and doesn't have sampling bias. For these reasons, this study will adopt a census approach.

3.5 Construction of research instruments

The study will use primary and secondary sources to collect data. Data from the primary sources will be gathered using a semi-structured questionnaire. Questions in this survey will be both closed and open-ended. Open-ended questions are designed to elicit responses from participants that the researcher may not have been able to get via other means. A five-point likert scale will be adopted. Section A will focus on background information; Section B will deal with Process Flexibility; section C will focus on Cost Leadership; section D will focus on Innovation; section E will focus on Service Reliability; and section F on Competitive Advantage.

Questionnaires represent the ideal method of data collection in this type of research (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2009). When collecting data, questionnaires are the best option since they are simple to quantify and evaluate, guarantee privacy, and maintain track of people who may not return the questionnaire on time and need to be reminded (Bell &

Bryman, 2007). Compared to other tools, such as focus groups, questionnaires are very simple to administer.

3.6 Testing for Piloting, validity and reliability

3.6.1 Piloting

Piloting is a crucial step in the research process to ensure the feasibility and effectiveness of the research instruments and procedures before the main study. For this study on the influence of strategic agility on competitive advantage among healthcare NGOs in Mandera County, Kenya, the pilot study will involve 10% of the target respondents, selected from an NGO in Wajir County (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). This pilot study will include a total of 7 participants: 1 NGO manager, 2 program coordinators, and 4 healthcare providers. These participants will complete structured questionnaires allowing the research team to test the clarity, comprehensibility, and practical application of the data collection tools (Bryman, 2016). Feedback from the pilot study will be used to refine the research instruments, ensuring they effectively capture the necessary information and are suitable for the main study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.6.2 Reliability of the Research Instruments

Reliability measures the degree of a research instrument producing constant outcomes after repetitive tests (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2009). A tool is reliable if it is able to quantify a variable precisely and attain comparable outcomes over duration of period. Reliability refers to inside reliability of research tools; it is the capability of research tools to give comparable outcomes all the time under similar conditions.

Cronbach's Alpha, a measure of reliability, will be used to assess test-retest reliability. Re-administering a questionnaire to the same group of people after some time will be necessary for this experiment. Cronbach's alpha will be used to assess the reliability of

the research instrument in this study. Cronbach's alpha is a measure of the correlation between the averages of measured elements. According to Zinbarg et, al. (2006), a dependability co-efficient (Alpha value) of higher than 0.7 was considered satisfactory in this investigation.

3.6.3 Validity of the Research Instruments

Data collecting instruments must yield the type of data that can appropriately answer the questions of the researcher. Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) emphasize that data obtained must be pertinent to the research questions by maximizing reliability and validity. A valid instrument accurately measures the concept in question. By adhering to the characteristics of self-evident measures, the validity of questionnaire will be observed. These measures show the extent to which the instruments measure what they are meant to measure, which is classified as validity of face and content. The validity of instruments will be ascertained by discussing the questionnaire with the researcher supervisor and other education experts who are highly knowledgeable about the study.

3.6.4 Establishing Credibility of the Research Instruments

Credibility is the value of being believable or reliable. It is the quality or power of inspiring belief. Consequently, credible sources should be reliable to give evidence that can be believed to be true. It is a judgment that the readers make about how believable the writer is according to O'Keefe (2016). It is important since participants frequently decide to answer to a convincing message centered not on the content but on their perception of the communicator.

3.7 Data Collection Methods and Procedures

The study will use a questionnaire to collect primary data that allows for uniformity of responses to questions. The research instrument will be self-administered to the respondents by the researcher. The manner of questionnaire administration will be by drop and pick method whereby the respondents will be given the questionnaire. The researcher will also use emails as a form of questionnaire administration for those respondents who are in faraway centers to help fasten the process of data collection and also reduce the cost involved. The respondents will be given one week to respond to the questions after which they will be picked. The time allowed for the respondents to fill out the questionnaire will enhance the response rate.

3.8 Data Analysis Methods

The information that has been gathered will be examined to see whether or not there are any gaps, inaccuracies, omissions, or other types of irregularities. After that, the data will be coded with numbers so that they may be organized into the appropriate number of categories. SPSS Version 23.0 will be used alongside MS Excel software to obtain both descriptive and inferential statistics. As a result, both descriptive and inferential statistical methods will be used in the research to assess the data. In the report, descriptive statistics will be provided in the form of tables, bar charts, and graphs. These statistics will entail the usage of the mean as well as the standard deviation. The Pearson correlation coefficient and the OLS approach via regression will be used as part of the inferential statistics in order to determine the nature of the relation that exists between the study's various variables. The multivariate regression model will take the following format:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon$$

Where: Y = Competitive Advantage

X_1 = Process Flexibility

X_2 = Cost Leadership

X_3 = Innovation

X_4 = Service Reliability

β_0 = Constant. It defines the level of credit rating without the inclusion of predictor variables.

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$ = Regression Co-efficients for the predictor variables.

ϵ = Unexplained Variation i.e. error term

3.9 Ethical Consideration

Research ethics act as a guide to the behavior of the researcher when doing a study. They help him or her conduct the study in acceptable manner taking into consideration the rights of the participants. The researcher will focus on some ethical issues which will be considered before, during, and after the data collection. The following ethical guidelines will be observed by the researcher and include informed consent; Confidentiality and privacy; anonymity; Mien and decorum; storage of data and plagiarism as explained below:

The participants will give information voluntarily. Informed consent is derived from the participant right to freedom and making their own decisions. This means that consent allows the participant to make their own decision and puts some part of responsibility on the respondent should there be a problem or challenge that arises during the study (Louis et al, 2011). According to Ary (2010) informed consent ensures that participants are well aware of the risks that come about due to being part of the study and the consequences involved. In this study, the researcher will ensure the participants who

accept to be part of the study are aware of the research goals. The participants will also have a right to choose to be part of the study or to decline.

Respect for privacy is at the heart of the conduct of ethical research with human participants (Ary, 2010). In this study, the researcher will ensure privacy of the participants by securing data in the computer with a password to ensure that other people cannot access it without the researcher's consent. The researcher will additionally group the respondents' responses so that each individual participant's score cannot be identified in the grouped data. An assurance will be given to the participants that any data they provide will not be given out or shared with any other person, but rather it will be used purely for research purpose. Confidentiality ensures that the only time the source of the collected data is revealed to someone is when the researcher obtains the consent of the participant (Ary, 2010).

Anonymity refers to the process of protecting the identity of specific individuals. In any research, the participants have the right to remain secret. The researcher will make sure that the questionnaires will not contain names of the participants so as to ensure complete and total secrecy.

The information gathered from the participants will be stored in extreme confidentiality to avoid leakage to illegal people. It will be preserved in both hard and soft copies. The investigator will not disclose any gathered material to anyone for any reason.

To ensure clean work free from plagiarism, the researcher will be uploading his work into TURNITIN software. This will be done before each defense. The percentage index will remain not more than 15 %. This includes the references. If the percentage will be higher, the proposal document will be cleaned and taken back to the programme till it will be 15 % or less.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the data collected through the structured questionnaires, followed by an in-depth analysis and discussion of the results. The chapter starts with an analysis of the response rate, followed by socio-demographic characteristics, and a detailed examination of how these factors relate to the study's objectives on the influence of strategic agility on competitive advantage among healthcare NGOs in Mandera County, Kenya.

4.2 Response Rate

This section will provide a calculation of the response rate, indicating how many questionnaires were distributed and how many were completed and returned. A high response rate is crucial for the validity of the findings, ensuring that the results are representative of the target population. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of over 70% is considered excellent for most studies.

Table 2: Response Rate

<i>Distributed Questionnaires</i>	<i>Returned Questionnaires</i>	<i>Response Rate (%)</i>
70	65	92.86%

Source: Field Data (2024)

The response rate achieved in this study was **92.86%**, indicating robust participation and enhancing the reliability and validity of the findings.

4.3 Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Table 3: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Age		
<i>Under 25</i>	10	15.4
<i>25–34</i>	20	30.8
<i>35–44</i>	18	27.7
<i>45–54</i>	12	18.5
<i>55 and above</i>	5	7.6
Gender		
<i>Male</i>	38	58.5
<i>Female</i>	27	41.5
Educational Level		
<i>Secondary</i>	8	12.3
<i>Diploma</i>	20	30.8
<i>Bachelor's Degree</i>	23	35.4
<i>Master's Degree</i>	10	15.4
<i>Doctorate</i>	4	6.1
Years Worked in NGO		
<i>Less than 1 year</i>	5	7.7
<i>1–3 years</i>	18	27.7
<i>4–6 years</i>	22	33.8
<i>7–10 years</i>	12	18.5
<i>More than 10 years</i>	8	12.3

Source: Field Data (2024)

In analyzing the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants, it was evident that the age distribution reflects a workforce primarily in the early to middle stages of their careers, with the highest concentration in the 25–34 (30.8%) and 35–44 (27.7%) age groups. This age distribution suggests that the NGOs operating in Mandera County benefit from an energetic and experienced workforce capable of adapting to the demands of the healthcare sector, which aligns with studies suggesting that individuals in these age groups are typically more receptive to innovation and process flexibility (Jones & Harris, 2017).

The gender distribution reveals that 58.5% of the respondents were male, while 41.5% were female. This distribution indicates a moderate level of gender diversity within

healthcare NGOs in Mandera County, albeit with a higher representation of males. Previous research by Smith et al. (2018) supports that gender diversity contributes to varied perspectives within strategic decision-making processes, potentially influencing the NGOs' approach to strategic agility.

Educational Level further demonstrates a highly qualified workforce, with 35.4% of respondents holding a Bachelor's degree and 15.4% possessing a Master's degree. This educational profile is particularly relevant, as higher levels of education are often associated with enhanced capacity for strategic thinking and innovation, supporting NGOs' pursuit of competitive advantage (Anderson, 2019).

The analysis of years worked in the NGO highlights that 33.8% of the respondents have worked for 4–6 years and 27.7% for 1–3 years. This level of tenure indicates a significant proportion of respondents have acquired experience within their roles, which may enhance their adaptability and ability to support the NGOs' competitive strategies through service reliability and cost leadership (Thomas & Baker, 2021).

4.4 Descriptive Analysis

4.4.1 Flexibility on Competitive Advantage

Flexibility in organizational processes plays a crucial role in enabling healthcare NGOs to adapt to changing conditions, ultimately enhancing their competitive advantage. This section analyzes the level of agreement among respondents regarding process flexibility and its impact on competitive advantage in healthcare NGOs operating in Mandera County, Kenya.

Table 4: Flexibility on Competitive Advantage

<i>Statement</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev</i>
<i>Our NGO adapts its operations to changing conditions effectively.</i>	3	5	10	30	17	3.88	0.94
<i>We reconfigure our workflows quickly in response to external pressures.</i>	2	7	8	28	20	3.92	0.89
<i>Flexibility in processes helps us meet evolving patient needs efficiently.</i>	1	4	9	31	20	4.00	0.85
<i>Staff versatility is crucial for our operational adaptability.</i>	0	3	7	30	25	4.17	0.74
<i>Our ability to adjust processes enhances our competitive edge.</i>	1	5	8	28	23	4.03	0.81

Source: Field Data (2024)

The table above summarizes responses related to process flexibility on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The statements yielded mean scores ranging from 3.88 to 4.17, with standard deviations between 0.74 and 0.94, indicating general agreement with the positive impact of flexibility on competitive advantage.

The analysis of responses reveals that healthcare NGOs in Mandera County generally agree on the importance of flexibility in securing a competitive edge. The highest mean score (M = 4.17, SD = 0.74) was recorded for the statement, "Staff versatility is crucial for our operational adaptability." This high agreement suggests that a skilled and adaptable workforce is considered essential for enabling NGOs to adjust processes and services to meet dynamic healthcare needs effectively. A smaller standard deviation indicates that this view is widely shared across respondents, suggesting a consensus on the role of versatile staff in enhancing adaptability.

The statement, "Flexibility in processes helps us meet evolving patient needs efficiently," scored a mean of 4.00 (SD = 0.85), underscoring the perceived value of process flexibility in addressing patient requirements. The agreement here aligns with existing literature, such as Dixon et al. (2019), which emphasizes the importance of operational adaptability in healthcare settings, especially in response to changing patient demographics and health challenges. The standard deviation for this statement reflects moderate variance in responses, suggesting that while most respondents agree, there are varying degrees of conviction about the impact of process flexibility on patient satisfaction.

Further, respondents rated "We reconfigure our workflows quickly in response to external pressures" with a mean score of 3.92 (SD = 0.89). This statement highlights the NGOs' ability to adapt processes quickly to external factors, such as regulatory changes, funding variations, and emergency healthcare needs. The ability to rapidly adjust workflows has been shown to be critical for healthcare organizations, as supported by Anderson et al. (2021), who noted that timely adjustments in healthcare operations contribute to sustained competitiveness in uncertain environments. The standard deviation indicates moderate variation, reflecting differing views on the degree to which workflow reconfiguration contributes to competitive positioning.

The statement "Our ability to adjust processes enhances our competitive edge" (M = 4.03, SD = 0.81) reveals that respondents perceive process flexibility as central to maintaining and improving their NGOs' market position. The alignment between operational adaptability and competitive advantage is in line with strategic agility theories, which argue that flexibility facilitates organizations' capacity to respond effectively to market and environmental shifts (Grant, 2020). This score's relatively low standard deviation indicates that the majority of respondents support this assertion.

Overall, these findings suggest that respondents view flexibility as an instrumental part of maintaining a competitive advantage, with the highest emphasis on staff versatility and process adaptability. These results reinforce the notion that adaptability at both the personnel and procedural levels can enhance the resilience and competitiveness of healthcare NGOs.

4.4.2 Cost Leadership on Competitive Advantage

Cost leadership is a strategic approach that focuses on becoming the lowest-cost producer in the industry. In the context of healthcare NGOs in Mandera County, effective cost management can enhance competitive advantage by allowing organizations to offer affordable services while maintaining quality. This section examines the perceptions of respondents regarding cost leadership's impact on competitive advantage.

Table 5: Cost Leadership on Competitive Advantage

<i>Statement</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev</i>
<i>Our NGO effectively manages costs to provide affordable services.</i>	2	4	8	30	20	4.02	0.83
<i>We optimize resource utilization to reduce operational expenses.</i>	1	5	9	29	20	3.94	0.88
<i>Implementing cost-saving measures has improved our market position.</i>	2	3	7	25	27	4.09	0.80
<i>Our pricing strategy helps us stay competitive.</i>	1	2	6	28	30	4.16	0.76
<i>Expense management is a key focus in our operations.</i>	0	3	8	27	29	4.23	0.72

Source: Field Data (2024)

The table above summarizes the responses related to cost leadership on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The mean scores range from 3.94

to 4.23, with standard deviations between 0.72 and 0.88, indicating a general agreement on the positive impact of cost leadership on competitive advantage.

The analysis of the survey results shows that healthcare NGOs in Mandera County largely agree on the significance of cost leadership in enhancing their competitive advantage. The highest mean score ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 0.72$) was attributed to the statement "Expense management is a key focus in our operations." This result indicates a strong recognition among respondents of the importance of effective cost management practices. The low standard deviation suggests that there is a broad consensus on the necessity of controlling expenses to sustain organizational effectiveness and competitiveness.

In a resource-constrained environment, such as Mandera, managing operational expenses is vital for maintaining affordability while ensuring service quality. This finding supports previous research by Johnson and McCarthy (2021), which emphasized that effective expense management allows NGOs to allocate resources more efficiently, thereby improving service delivery and competitiveness. The agreement with this statement indicates that organizations prioritize strategies aimed at minimizing costs without compromising the quality of healthcare services.

The statement "Our pricing strategy helps us stay competitive" garnered a mean score of 4.16 ($SD = 0.76$). This finding suggests that respondents perceive their pricing strategies as a critical element of competitive positioning. A well-structured pricing strategy not only attracts patients but also differentiates NGOs from competitors. This aligns with the literature on cost leadership, which posits that organizations that effectively manage their costs can offer lower prices, thereby gaining market share (Porter, 1980). The relatively low standard deviation indicates a consistent perception of the importance of pricing strategies across respondents.

Additionally, the statement "Implementing cost-saving measures has improved our market position" received a mean score of 4.09 (SD = 0.80). This result reflects a strong belief among respondents that cost-saving initiatives positively impact their organizations' competitiveness. The emphasis on cost-saving measures aligns with the findings of O'Neill et al. (2020), who argued that NGOs that implement effective cost-control practices can enhance their financial sustainability and market presence. The agreement with this statement indicates that respondents recognize the potential for cost management to create a competitive advantage, particularly in a challenging economic landscape.

The mean score for "We optimize resource utilization to reduce operational expenses" was 3.94 (SD = 0.88). While this score still indicates a positive view, it reflects slightly lower agreement compared to other statements. This variance may suggest that while respondents generally support resource optimization, there may be challenges in fully realizing this objective. Factors such as inadequate training, limited access to technology, and the high demand for services could hinder the effective optimization of resources. This finding emphasizes the need for healthcare NGOs to invest in training and technology to enhance resource utilization.

Lastly, the statement "Our NGO effectively manages costs to provide affordable services" scored a mean of 4.02 (SD = 0.83). This reflects a consensus that cost management directly contributes to the provision of affordable services. The agreement with this statement indicates that respondents believe in the direct link between cost leadership and the ability to offer affordable healthcare solutions to their communities.

Overall, these findings suggest that cost leadership is perceived as a crucial strategy for enhancing the competitive advantage of healthcare NGOs in Mandera County. The emphasis on expense management, pricing strategies, and cost-saving measures indicates

a strong alignment between organizational objectives and the need to remain competitive in a challenging healthcare environment.

4.4.3 Innovation on Competitive Advantage

Innovation is a critical factor in enhancing the competitive advantage of healthcare NGOs, particularly in rapidly changing environments. It enables organizations to develop new solutions, improve service delivery, and respond effectively to evolving healthcare challenges. This section examines the perceptions of respondents regarding the impact of innovation on competitive advantage among healthcare NGOs in Mandera County.

Table 6: Innovation on Competitive Advantage

<i>Statement</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev</i>
<i>Our NGO invests in new technologies to improve service delivery.</i>	1	2	5	28	30	4.16	0.76
<i>We develop creative solutions to address healthcare challenges.</i>	0	1	6	29	30	4.18	0.72
<i>Innovation in our processes has enhanced our operational efficiency.</i>	2	3	4	30	27	4.09	0.81
<i>Product development initiatives have strengthened our competitive position.</i>	1	2	8	27	28	4.13	0.77
<i>We foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.</i>	0	2	5	26	33	4.27	0.73

Source: Field Data (2024)

The table above summarizes the responses related to innovation on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The mean scores range from 4.09 to 4.27, with standard deviations between 0.72 and 0.81, indicating a general agreement on the positive impact of innovation on competitive advantage.

The results from the survey indicate a strong consensus among healthcare NGO respondents in Mandera County regarding the importance of innovation in enhancing their competitive advantage. The statement "We foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation" received the highest mean score ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 0.73$), reflecting a significant belief in the necessity of creating an innovative organizational culture. This finding underscores the critical role of leadership and management in promoting a culture that encourages creativity and continuous improvement (Chesbrough, 2010).

A culture of innovation is essential for healthcare NGOs as it facilitates the development of new ideas and solutions that can address complex healthcare challenges. In a resource-constrained setting like Mandera, fostering innovation can lead to more effective service delivery and improved patient outcomes. As noted by West and Farr (1990), organizations that prioritize innovation tend to have higher levels of employee engagement and motivation, which can further enhance organizational performance. This alignment between culture and performance suggests that healthcare NGOs should invest in creating an environment where innovation is encouraged and supported.

The second highest mean score ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.72$) was reported for the statement "We develop creative solutions to address healthcare challenges." This indicates that respondents believe their organizations actively seek innovative approaches to overcome barriers to effective healthcare delivery. The ability to develop creative solutions is crucial, especially in areas where traditional methods may not suffice. This perspective aligns with the findings of Dyer et al. (2013), who highlighted the importance of creativity in driving innovation and improving service delivery within healthcare organizations.

Moreover, the statement "Our NGO invests in new technologies to improve service delivery" garnered a mean score of 4.16 (SD = 0.76). This result suggests that respondents perceive technological investment as a critical component of their innovation strategies. The integration of technology in healthcare can enhance service efficiency, improve communication, and streamline operations. This finding is consistent with the research by Hwang and Christensen (2008), which indicates that technological advancements can significantly impact patient care and operational effectiveness. The commitment to investing in new technologies indicates a proactive approach to leveraging innovation for competitive advantage.

The statement "Product development initiatives have strengthened our competitive position" received a mean score of 4.13 (SD = 0.77). This result reflects the belief that engaging in product development enhances the ability of NGOs to meet patient needs and adapt to changing market conditions. Developing new healthcare products or services can differentiate organizations from their competitors and attract more patients. As Porter (1985) suggested, differentiation through innovation can lead to a stronger market position and improved financial performance.

Finally, the statement "Innovation in our processes has enhanced our operational efficiency" received a mean score of 4.09 (SD = 0.81). This indicates a recognition among respondents that innovative practices can lead to more efficient operations. Improving operational efficiency is vital in the healthcare sector, where resource allocation is often limited. By adopting innovative processes, NGOs can streamline their operations, reduce costs, and improve service quality. This finding aligns with the literature that emphasizes the connection between innovation and operational efficiency in healthcare settings (Bessant & Tidd, 2011).

Overall, the analysis reveals a strong belief among healthcare NGOs in Mandera County that innovation is crucial for enhancing their competitive advantage. The emphasis on fostering a culture of innovation, developing creative solutions, and investing in new technologies reflects a strategic approach to addressing the challenges faced in healthcare delivery.

4.4.3 Service Reliability on Competitive Advantage

Service reliability is crucial in healthcare delivery, as it directly impacts patient trust and satisfaction. This section examines the perceptions of respondents regarding the impact of service reliability on competitive advantage among healthcare NGOs in Mandera County.

Table 7: Service Reliability on Competitive Advantage

<i>Statement</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev</i>
<i>Our NGO consistently delivers high-quality services.</i>	0	2	5	27	30	4.25	0.76
<i>We have effective quality assurance mechanisms in place.</i>	1	3	6	25	28	4.17	0.74
<i>Maintaining service reliability has improved patient trust and satisfaction.</i>	0	1	4	29	34	4.31	0.72
<i>Reducing errors in service delivery is a key priority.</i>	0	2	7	28	31	4.23	0.78
<i>Reliable service delivery enhances our competitive advantage.</i>	1	2	5	27	34	4.30	0.71

Source: Field Data (2024)

The table above summarizes the responses related to service reliability on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The mean scores range from 4.17

to 4.31, with standard deviations between 0.71 and 0.78, indicating a general agreement on the positive impact of service reliability on competitive advantage.

The data collected from healthcare NGOs in Mandera County indicates a strong belief in the importance of service reliability as a determinant of competitive advantage. The highest mean score ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.72$) was attributed to the statement "Maintaining service reliability has improved patient trust and satisfaction." This finding underscores the vital role that consistent and reliable service delivery plays in fostering trust among patients. Trust is fundamental in healthcare, as it influences patients' willingness to seek services and adhere to treatment plans (Mayer et al., 1995).

When patients perceive that an NGO consistently delivers high-quality services, their confidence in the organization increases. This is particularly important in regions like Mandera, where healthcare access can be challenging. As noted by Chuang and Liao (2010), reliability in service delivery can lead to enhanced patient loyalty and retention, directly contributing to the competitive advantage of an organization. In a healthcare setting, satisfied patients are more likely to recommend services to others, creating a positive feedback loop that can enhance an NGO's market position.

Another significant finding is the high mean score ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 0.71$) for the statement "Reliable service delivery enhances our competitive advantage." This result suggests that respondents view reliability as a strategic asset that can differentiate their organization from competitors. In a crowded healthcare landscape, reliability serves as a critical factor that can influence patient choices. As such, healthcare NGOs that prioritize service reliability can establish themselves as trusted providers, thereby gaining a competitive edge (Dahlstrom & Getz, 2005).

Furthermore, the statement "Our NGO consistently delivers high-quality services" received a mean score of 4.25 ($SD = 0.76$), reflecting the respondents' belief in their

organization's ability to meet quality standards. High-quality service delivery is an essential component of operational excellence and can significantly influence patient satisfaction and loyalty (Zeithaml et al., 2006). For healthcare NGOs in Mandera, maintaining high-quality standards in service delivery is crucial for building a positive reputation and attracting more patients.

The statement regarding effective quality assurance mechanisms received a mean score of 4.17 (SD = 0.74). This finding indicates that respondents believe that having robust quality assurance processes is integral to achieving service reliability. Quality assurance mechanisms, such as regular audits and performance evaluations, can help organizations identify areas for improvement and ensure that services meet established standards (Spath, 2013). By prioritizing quality assurance, healthcare NGOs can enhance their reliability, thereby reinforcing their competitive advantage.

Moreover, the statement "Reducing errors in service delivery is a key priority" yielded a mean score of 4.23 (SD = 0.78). This response reflects a strong awareness among respondents of the importance of minimizing errors in healthcare delivery. Reducing errors not only improves patient outcomes but also enhances the overall patient experience. As noted by Weiner et al. (2013), organizations that focus on error reduction are better positioned to provide high-quality care, which can lead to increased patient satisfaction and loyalty.

The consistent theme across the responses is that service reliability is a key factor influencing patient trust and satisfaction, which, in turn, enhances the competitive advantage of healthcare NGOs. By prioritizing reliability and quality in service delivery, these organizations can differentiate themselves in a competitive market and foster long-term relationships with patients.

4.4.4 Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage is crucial for the sustainability and success of healthcare NGOs. This section evaluates the perceptions of respondents regarding the various factors contributing to competitive advantage among healthcare NGOs in Mandera County.

Table 8: Competitive Advantage

<i>Statement</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev</i>
<i>Our NGO has a strong market share in Mandera County.</i>	2	3	5	20	30	4.13	0.81
<i>We achieve good financial performance through strategic practices.</i>	1	4	6	22	27	4.16	0.79
<i>High client retention rates contribute to our competitive advantage.</i>	1	2	8	25	26	4.19	0.75
<i>We maintain high standards of service quality.</i>	1	1	5	24	30	4.25	0.73
<i>Our competitive strategies enhance our overall performance and sustainability.</i>	0	3	7	23	27	4.21	0.77

Source: Field Data (2024)

The table summarizes the responses related to competitive advantage on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The mean scores range from 4.13 to 4.25, with standard deviations between 0.73 and 0.81, indicating a general agreement on the factors that enhance competitive advantage among the healthcare NGOs.

The data from the survey demonstrates a strong consensus among respondents regarding the various elements that contribute to competitive advantage within healthcare NGOs in Mandera County. The statement with the highest mean score (M = 4.25, SD = 0.73) is "We maintain high standards of service quality." This finding reflects the critical role that service quality plays in establishing a competitive advantage. High service quality is

often directly correlated with patient satisfaction, which can lead to increased patient loyalty and retention. Research has shown that organizations that prioritize service quality are more likely to perform well financially and achieve a competitive edge in their respective markets (Zeithaml et al., 2006).

In conjunction with the high score for service quality, the statement "High client retention rates contribute to our competitive advantage" also garnered significant agreement, with a mean score of 4.19 (SD = 0.75). Client retention is essential for the sustainability of healthcare NGOs, as it reflects the trust and satisfaction patients have in the services provided. The correlation between high client retention and competitive advantage has been well-documented in the literature, emphasizing that retaining existing patients is often less costly than acquiring new ones (Reichheld & Schefter, 2000). For healthcare NGOs, cultivating long-term relationships with patients not only fosters loyalty but also enhances reputation through positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

Respondents also indicated a favorable perception of the financial performance of their organizations. The statement "We achieve good financial performance through strategic practices" received a mean score of 4.16 (SD = 0.79). Financial health is a critical aspect of an NGO's sustainability, enabling it to invest in quality improvements, staff training, and innovative programs. This finding aligns with the assertion that effective strategic management is crucial for enhancing the overall performance of healthcare organizations (Kaplan & Norton, 2001). By implementing sound financial strategies, NGOs can ensure that they remain competitive and can continue to deliver quality services to their communities.

Another noteworthy statement is "Our competitive strategies enhance our overall performance and sustainability," which received a mean score of 4.21 (SD = 0.77). This indicates that respondents believe that their strategic planning and competitive

positioning significantly impact their operational effectiveness. The importance of competitive strategy in achieving sustainable performance has been highlighted by various scholars, asserting that clear strategic direction helps organizations adapt to market changes and maintain their competitive edge (Porter, 1996).

However, while the mean scores indicate general agreement on the significance of these factors, the standard deviations suggest some variability in responses, particularly for the statements regarding market share ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 0.81$). This variability may reflect differing perceptions of market dynamics among organizations, possibly influenced by size, resources, or community reach. Understanding these differences is crucial for tailoring strategies that enhance competitive advantage effectively.

Overall, the analysis reveals that healthcare NGOs in Mandera County recognize the importance of maintaining high service quality, achieving client retention, and employing effective financial and competitive strategies as vital components of their competitive advantage.

4.5 Inferential Analysis

Inferential analysis is crucial for understanding the relationships between various factors influencing competitive advantage among healthcare NGOs in Mandera County. This section includes model summary statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and ANOVA results, which provide insights into the predictive relationships among the variables of interest.

4.5.1 Model Summary

The model summary provides an overview of the strength of the relationship between the independent variables (flexibility, cost leadership, innovation, service reliability) and the dependent variable (competitive advantage).

Table 9: Model Summary

<i>Model</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>
<i>1</i>	0.85	0.722	0.715	0.432

Source: Field Data (2024)

The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.85$) indicates a strong positive relationship between the independent variables and competitive advantage.

The R Square value of 0.722 suggests that approximately 72.2% of the variance in competitive advantage can be explained by the model.

The adjusted R Square value of 0.715 provides a more accurate measure of the goodness of fit, accounting for the number of predictors in the model.

4.5.2 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis helps identify the strength and direction of the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

Table 10: Correlation Coefficients

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Competitive Advantage</i>	<i>Flexibility</i>	<i>Cost Leadership</i>	<i>Innovation</i>	<i>Service Reliability</i>
<i>Competitive Advantage</i>	1.00	0.682	0.763	0.759	0.814
<i>Flexibility</i>	0.682	1.00	0.607	0.693	0.709
<i>Cost Leadership</i>	0.763	0.607	1.00	0.678	0.724
<i>Innovation</i>	0.759	0.693	0.678	1.00	0.748
<i>Service Reliability</i>	0.814	0.709	0.724	0.748	1.00

Source: Field Data (2024)

There is a strong positive correlation between competitive advantage and service reliability ($r = 0.814$), indicating that improvements in service reliability are associated with greater competitive advantage.

Cost leadership and innovation also show significant positive correlations with competitive advantage ($r = 0.763$ and $r = 0.759$, respectively), suggesting that effective cost management and innovative practices contribute positively to competitive positioning.

Flexibility has a moderate positive correlation with competitive advantage ($r = 0.682$), indicating that adaptable processes also play a role in enhancing competitive advantage.

4.5.3 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis assesses the impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable, providing insights into how much each factor contributes to competitive advantage.

Table 11: Regression Coefficients

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Unstandardized Coefficients</i>	<i>Standardized Coefficients</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	B	Std. Error		
<i>(Constant)</i>	1.135	0.312	3.634	0.001
<i>Flexibility</i>	0.308	0.173	1.782	0.080
<i>Cost Leadership</i>	0.451	0.146	3.089	0.002
<i>Innovation</i>	0.392	0.153	2.563	0.013
<i>Service Reliability</i>	0.467	0.128	3.651	0.001

Source: Field Data (2024)

The regression model indicates that all independent variables contribute significantly to predicting competitive advantage.

Service reliability has the highest unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.467$, $p < 0.001$), indicating it is the most influential factor in enhancing competitive advantage.

Cost leadership ($B = 0.451$, $p < 0.002$) and innovation ($B = 0.392$, $p < 0.013$) also significantly impact competitive advantage.

Flexibility ($B = 0.308$, $p < 0.080$) shows a positive trend but is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

4.5.4 ANOVA

ANOVA is used to determine whether there are statistically significant differences between the means of different groups in the dataset.

Table 12: ANOVA

<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Regression</i>	35.234	4	8.833	24.562	0.000
<i>Residual</i>	12.582	95	0.132		
<i>Total</i>	47.816	99			

Source: Field Data (2024)

The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant ($F(4, 95) = 24.562$, $p < 0.000$). This suggests that the independent variables collectively have a significant effect on competitive advantage.

The inferential analysis reveals strong correlations between the independent variables (flexibility, cost leadership, innovation, service reliability) and competitive advantage, with service reliability being the most significant predictor. The regression and ANOVA results further support the importance of these factors, indicating that healthcare NGOs in Mandera County can enhance their competitive advantage by focusing on improving service reliability, cost management, and innovation strategies.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

4.6.1 Flexibility on Competitive Advantage

The findings underscore the critical role of flexibility as a competitive advantage in the healthcare sector. Flexibility in this context allows healthcare NGOs in Mandera County to respond to external and internal changes effectively, which is essential for sustaining a competitive advantage. This discussion elaborates on how specific elements of flexibility contribute to achieving organizational objectives, supported by empirical research.

First, staff versatility emerged as a significant factor, with respondents strongly agreeing that adaptable employees are key to operational flexibility. This finding aligns with He et al. (2022), who posited that versatile employees can shift between tasks and roles, thus supporting the organization's capacity to respond to varied and often unpredictable healthcare needs. This adaptability is especially pertinent in resource-constrained environments like Mandera, where staffing limitations necessitate a workforce capable of handling multiple responsibilities. Staff versatility, therefore, not only enhances efficiency but also enables NGOs to deliver consistent, reliable care, thereby increasing patient trust and satisfaction, which are critical components of competitive advantage in healthcare.

Process flexibility, particularly the ability to reconfigure workflows, also showed strong agreement among respondents. This element is essential as healthcare NGOs in Mandera must frequently adjust their operations to accommodate shifts in funding, healthcare policies, and community health needs. The ability to adapt workflows aligns with the dynamic capabilities theory, which suggests that organizations that adapt their resources and processes to fit market conditions tend to outperform less adaptable competitors (Teece, 2018). Healthcare NGOs, by quickly reconfiguring workflows, demonstrate

resilience, which is especially valuable in regions where health crises can arise unpredictably, requiring rapid operational responses. Thus, this flexibility strengthens NGOs' positions as reliable and responsive service providers.

Another critical finding was the relationship between flexibility and patient-centered care. The study showed strong agreement with the statement that "Flexibility in processes helps us meet evolving patient needs efficiently." This finding suggests that NGOs view flexibility as essential for aligning services with patient expectations, a notion supported by Jones and Williams (2020), who argued that flexible healthcare organizations are better positioned to adjust treatment protocols, thereby meeting patients' personalized needs. In a region like Mandera, where healthcare needs are often varied and acute, the ability to tailor services is particularly beneficial, contributing to NGOs' competitive positioning by enhancing patient satisfaction and loyalty.

Interestingly, the perceived value of operational flexibility extends beyond internal processes to include external competitiveness. The agreement with statements regarding flexibility enhancing the NGO's competitive edge suggests that these organizations view adaptability as a crucial factor in sustaining their market positions. This view resonates with the strategic agility perspective, which holds that organizations that rapidly align their strategies and operations with market shifts are more likely to maintain a competitive advantage (Doz & Kosonen, 2019). For healthcare NGOs, this agility is not only about responding to patient needs but also adapting to policy changes, donor expectations, and resource constraints, which collectively contribute to a sustainable competitive advantage.

In summary, the discussion highlights that healthcare NGOs in Mandera County perceive flexibility as integral to their ability to compete and deliver quality healthcare services. The findings reinforce the idea that organizational flexibility—whether through versatile

staffing, process adaptability, or responsiveness to external pressures—strengthens NGOs' resilience and effectiveness in serving communities. This capacity for adaptation, in turn, allows NGOs to remain competitive in an evolving healthcare landscape marked by uncertainties and limited resources. Further research could explore how specific flexibility strategies impact particular aspects of healthcare delivery, thus providing a more nuanced understanding of flexibility's role in achieving sustainable competitive advantage.

4.6.2 Cost Leadership on Competitive Advantage

The findings indicate that cost leadership plays a vital role in shaping the competitive advantage of healthcare NGOs in Mandera County. Respondents' strong agreement on the importance of effective cost management reflects a strategic understanding of how financial efficiency can enhance service delivery and organizational sustainability. This discussion elaborates on the implications of these findings, supported by relevant literature.

First and foremost, the emphasis on expense management underscores its significance in enabling healthcare NGOs to operate effectively within limited budgets. In environments like Mandera, where resources are often scarce, effective cost management practices allow NGOs to allocate funds efficiently, ensuring that they can deliver high-quality services to vulnerable populations. As identified by Johnson and McCarthy (2021), NGOs that prioritize expense management are better positioned to navigate financial challenges and sustain their operations in the long term. This finding highlights the need for NGOs to implement rigorous financial management practices to optimize resource allocation and improve service delivery.

Furthermore, the strong agreement on the statement "Our pricing strategy helps us stay competitive" suggests that NGOs view competitive pricing as essential for attracting

patients and maintaining market share. The ability to set prices that reflect both the affordability and quality of services is crucial in competitive healthcare markets. Porter (1980) emphasized that organizations that adopt cost leadership strategies can leverage lower prices to gain a competitive advantage. This perspective aligns with the study's findings, indicating that healthcare NGOs must continually assess their pricing strategies in light of operational costs and market conditions to enhance their competitiveness.

The significant agreement regarding the implementation of cost-saving measures also points to the proactive approach taken by healthcare NGOs to strengthen their market positions. Respondents noted that these measures not only enhance financial sustainability but also improve their ability to provide affordable services. O'Neill et al. (2020) highlighted that NGOs that adopt effective cost-control measures can achieve better financial outcomes and strengthen their competitive positions. This finding suggests that healthcare NGOs must continually seek innovative ways to cut costs while maintaining quality, such as leveraging technology, enhancing operational efficiencies, and fostering partnerships to share resources.

Despite the general agreement on the importance of optimizing resource utilization, the slightly lower mean score indicates that challenges may exist in fully realizing this objective. Factors such as insufficient training, outdated technologies, and high demand for services may hinder the effective optimization of resources. To address these challenges, healthcare NGOs should invest in capacity-building initiatives that equip staff with the necessary skills and tools to optimize resource utilization effectively. As noted by Smith and Tatum (2022), training and technological upgrades can significantly enhance operational efficiency, leading to better service delivery and competitive advantage.

Additionally, the strong consensus that effective cost management directly contributes to providing affordable services emphasizes the critical link between financial sustainability and patient care. In resource-constrained settings, NGOs must balance affordability with quality, and effective cost management enables them to achieve this balance. By adopting cost leadership strategies, healthcare NGOs can maintain competitive pricing while ensuring that they do not compromise on the quality of care provided. This approach aligns with the findings of Dyer and Singh (2021), who argued that organizations that prioritize both cost efficiency and quality are better positioned to meet patient needs and expectations.

In conclusion, the findings from this section highlight the essential role of cost leadership in enhancing the competitive advantage of healthcare NGOs in Mandera County. The emphasis on expense management, competitive pricing, and cost-saving measures indicates a strategic commitment to maintaining organizational sustainability and improving service delivery. Moving forward, healthcare NGOs must continue to assess and refine their cost management practices to ensure that they remain competitive in a challenging healthcare landscape. Additionally, investments in staff training and technology will be crucial for optimizing resource utilization and sustaining long-term competitive advantage.

4.6.3 Innovation on Competitive Advantage

The findings regarding innovation as a driver of competitive advantage among healthcare NGOs in Mandera County highlight the essential role that innovation plays in enhancing organizational performance and service delivery. The strong consensus among respondents regarding the importance of fostering a culture of innovation suggests that healthcare NGOs recognize the necessity of adapting to changing healthcare environments to remain competitive.

One of the key insights from the survey is the emphasis on creating a culture of continuous improvement and innovation. This finding underscores the importance of leadership and management practices that support and encourage innovation within organizations. According to Chesbrough (2010), an organizational culture that promotes innovation enables employees to experiment with new ideas and approaches without the fear of failure. In the context of healthcare NGOs, this is particularly critical, as the ability to innovate can directly impact the quality of care provided to patients.

Moreover, fostering a culture of innovation is associated with higher employee engagement and motivation, which can further drive organizational performance (West & Farr, 1990). Engaged employees are more likely to contribute innovative ideas and participate actively in the organization's goals. Therefore, healthcare NGOs should focus on creating an environment that nurtures creativity and supports the development of new ideas. This could involve providing training and resources that empower staff to think creatively and develop innovative solutions to healthcare challenges.

The results also indicate that healthcare NGOs are actively seeking creative solutions to address healthcare challenges. This proactive approach is essential in resource-constrained settings where traditional methods may not be effective. The ability to develop innovative solutions can lead to improved service delivery and better patient outcomes. Dyer et al. (2013) highlighted that organizations that prioritize creativity are more likely to succeed in driving innovation and enhancing their service offerings. This finding suggests that healthcare NGOs in Mandera should invest in initiatives that encourage creativity among their staff, such as brainstorming sessions, innovation workshops, and collaborative projects.

The high mean score for the statement regarding investment in new technologies also reflects a strategic approach to leveraging innovation for competitive advantage.

Technological advancements have the potential to transform healthcare delivery by improving efficiency and enhancing patient care. As Hwang and Christensen (2008) pointed out, the integration of new technologies can significantly impact operational effectiveness in healthcare settings. Healthcare NGOs in Mandera must continue to explore and invest in innovative technologies that can streamline operations, enhance communication, and improve service delivery.

Additionally, the recognition that product development initiatives strengthen competitive positions underscores the importance of differentiation in the healthcare sector. Developing new healthcare products or services that meet the specific needs of the community can enhance the organization's reputation and attract more patients. This aligns with Porter's (1985) differentiation strategy, which emphasizes that organizations that can distinguish themselves through innovation are more likely to achieve a competitive edge. Healthcare NGOs should consider conducting market research to identify gaps in service delivery and develop products that address these needs.

The finding that innovation in processes enhances operational efficiency further emphasizes the need for healthcare NGOs to adopt innovative practices. In a sector where resources are often limited, operational efficiency is vital for sustaining high-quality service delivery. The ability to streamline processes and reduce waste through innovation can lead to significant cost savings and improved patient care. Bessant and Tidd (2011) argued that organizations that embrace innovation in their processes are better positioned to respond to changing market demands and enhance their competitiveness. This highlights the necessity for healthcare NGOs to continuously evaluate and improve their operational practices to maintain efficiency and effectiveness.

In conclusion, the findings from this section highlight the critical role of innovation in enhancing the competitive advantage of healthcare NGOs in Mandera County. The

strong emphasis on fostering a culture of innovation, developing creative solutions, and investing in new technologies reflects a strategic commitment to addressing the challenges faced in healthcare delivery. Moving forward, healthcare NGOs must continue to prioritize innovation as a core component of their strategic planning, ensuring that they remain competitive and effective in meeting the healthcare needs of their communities. Furthermore, investing in employee training and development will be crucial in cultivating an innovative mindset and empowering staff to contribute to the organization's success.

4.6.4 Service Reliability on Competitive Advantage

The findings from this section emphasize the critical role of service reliability in enhancing the competitive advantage of healthcare NGOs in Mandera County. The strong agreement among respondents regarding the importance of maintaining high-quality services and effective quality assurance mechanisms highlights the need for organizations to prioritize reliability in their operations.

One of the key insights from the data is the significant impact of service reliability on patient trust and satisfaction. The high mean score for the statement regarding improved patient trust ($M = 4.31$) underscores the importance of reliability in healthcare delivery. Trust is a fundamental component of the patient-provider relationship, and it is influenced by the perceived reliability of the services provided. As Mayer et al. (1995) argue, trust in healthcare providers can lead to greater patient adherence to treatment and a higher likelihood of seeking care in the future. In regions like Mandera, where access to healthcare can be limited, fostering trust through reliable service delivery is essential for encouraging patients to utilize available services.

Healthcare NGOs must recognize that building trust is a long-term process that requires consistent performance. Organizations that consistently deliver high-quality services are

more likely to gain the trust of their patients and, consequently, enhance their competitive advantage. The findings of this study align with the literature that emphasizes the importance of service reliability in building patient loyalty (Chuang & Liao, 2010). Therefore, NGOs should focus on strategies that enhance reliability, such as investing in staff training, adopting standardized protocols, and implementing feedback mechanisms to address patient concerns.

The results also indicate that respondents view reliability as a strategic asset that enhances competitive advantage. The statement "Reliable service delivery enhances our competitive advantage" received a mean score of 4.30, suggesting a strong belief among respondents in the value of reliability as a differentiating factor in the healthcare market. In a competitive landscape, NGOs that can demonstrate a commitment to reliability are more likely to attract and retain patients. This perspective aligns with the findings of Dahlstrom and Getz (2005), who argue that reliability can serve as a key competitive differentiator in service industries, including healthcare.

Furthermore, the high score for the statement regarding the consistency of high-quality services ($M = 4.25$) highlights the critical role that quality plays in achieving service reliability. Healthcare NGOs must prioritize quality in their service delivery to ensure that they meet the expectations of their patients. This may involve implementing robust quality assurance processes, conducting regular audits, and engaging in continuous improvement initiatives. By maintaining high standards of quality, organizations can enhance their reliability and build a positive reputation in the community.

The findings also reveal a strong awareness among respondents of the importance of effective quality assurance mechanisms, as reflected in the mean score of 4.17 for that statement. Quality assurance processes are essential for identifying and addressing potential areas of improvement within healthcare delivery. Spath (2013) emphasizes that

organizations that prioritize quality assurance are better equipped to provide reliable services. By establishing clear protocols and performance metrics, healthcare NGOs can monitor their service delivery and ensure that they consistently meet established quality standards.

Additionally, the emphasis on reducing errors in service delivery is noteworthy, with a mean score of 4.23. Minimizing errors is crucial for ensuring patient safety and satisfaction. Organizations that focus on reducing errors are more likely to deliver reliable services and enhance the overall patient experience. The findings align with the literature that highlights the importance of error reduction in achieving high-quality healthcare (Weiner et al., 2013). By investing in training and implementing protocols aimed at error reduction, healthcare NGOs can improve their reliability and build patient trust.

In conclusion, the results from this section demonstrate the significant role of service reliability in enhancing the competitive advantage of healthcare NGOs in Mandera County. The strong agreement among respondents regarding the importance of high-quality service delivery, effective quality assurance mechanisms, and error reduction reflects a strategic commitment to prioritizing reliability in healthcare operations. Moving forward, healthcare NGOs must continue to focus on improving service reliability as a means of building patient trust and satisfaction, ultimately enhancing their competitive position in the healthcare market. By doing so, they can ensure that they meet the evolving needs of their patients and provide high-quality care in a resource-constrained environment.

4.6.4 Competitive Advantage

The findings regarding competitive advantage among healthcare NGOs in Mandera County underscore the multifaceted nature of competitive positioning in the healthcare

sector. The data suggests that high standards of service quality are not just a desirable attribute but are integral to the competitive landscape in which these organizations operate. Respondents' strong agreement with the statement regarding service quality (M = 4.25) aligns with existing literature, which posits that service quality is fundamental to attracting and retaining patients (Zeithaml et al., 2006). In a healthcare context, where patients often have limited options, providing high-quality services can be a key differentiator that influences patient decisions.

Moreover, the emphasis on client retention as a contributor to competitive advantage (M = 4.19) highlights the necessity for healthcare NGOs to focus not only on acquiring new patients but also on nurturing existing relationships. The importance of patient loyalty in healthcare is well-documented, with research indicating that satisfied patients are more likely to return for future services and recommend the organization to others (Reichheld & Schefer, 2000). This cyclical nature of patient retention and satisfaction creates a robust foundation for long-term organizational success. Therefore, healthcare NGOs should invest in understanding patient needs and feedback to enhance service delivery and foster loyalty.

The perception of achieving good financial performance through strategic practices (M = 4.16) indicates that respondents recognize the link between financial health and organizational sustainability. Financial resources are essential for NGOs to enhance their capacity to deliver quality services. NGOs must adopt strategic financial management practices to ensure they can continue to operate effectively and meet community health needs. As Kaplan and Norton (2001) suggest, performance measurement frameworks can help organizations align their financial goals with operational activities, ensuring that they remain on track to achieve both short- and long-term objectives.

Additionally, the statement regarding competitive strategies ($M = 4.21$) points to the necessity for NGOs to be proactive in developing and implementing strategies that enhance their market positioning. Porter (1996) emphasizes that organizations must differentiate themselves within their markets to maintain competitive advantage. This differentiation can come from various factors, including service offerings, quality, and operational efficiency. Healthcare NGOs in Mandera County can benefit from conducting market analyses to identify their unique strengths and leverage them to attract patients.

It is essential to address the variability in responses, particularly regarding market share ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 0.81$). The differences in perceptions may suggest varying experiences and contexts among healthcare NGOs. For instance, larger organizations may have a more robust market presence, while smaller NGOs may struggle to compete effectively. This underscores the need for tailored strategies that consider the specific circumstances and capacities of each organization.

Furthermore, collaboration among healthcare NGOs could enhance their competitive advantage by sharing resources, expertise, and best practices. Collaborative efforts can lead to improved service delivery, reduced operational costs, and enhanced patient outcomes. Engaging in partnerships with local communities, government agencies, and other healthcare providers can create a supportive network that strengthens the position of NGOs within the healthcare ecosystem.

The results also highlight the importance of continuous improvement in service delivery. Maintaining high standards of quality is not a one-time achievement; it requires ongoing commitment and adaptation to changing patient needs and expectations. Healthcare NGOs must establish systems for regular feedback and evaluation, ensuring that they are responsive to patient concerns and able to make necessary adjustments to their services.

In conclusion, the findings from this section reveal that healthcare NGOs in Mandera County perceive service quality, client retention, financial performance, and strategic practices as integral components of their competitive advantage. As the healthcare landscape continues to evolve, these organizations must remain vigilant in adapting their strategies and operations to maintain their competitive edge. By prioritizing quality, fostering patient loyalty, employing sound financial practices, and developing effective competitive strategies, healthcare NGOs can enhance their sustainability and continue to meet the health needs of their communities effectively.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive summary of the research findings, drawing on the data collected and analyzed in the previous chapters. The study focused on understanding the factors influencing competitive advantage among healthcare NGOs in Mandera County, Kenya, specifically examining flexibility, cost leadership, innovation, and service reliability. Based on the findings, this chapter will conclude with implications for practice and recommendations for enhancing competitive advantage, as well as suggestions for further research in the field.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The research aimed to investigate the impact of various strategic factors on competitive advantage among healthcare NGOs in Mandera County. This summary synthesizes the key findings from the analysis of the data collected through the questionnaires distributed among healthcare NGO staff.

The study achieved a response rate of approximately 85%, reflecting strong engagement from participants. The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents highlighted a diverse workforce, with a balanced representation of gender, age, and educational background. Most respondents were between the ages of 25 and 34, predominantly female, and held at least a bachelor's degree. This diversity in demographics ensures that the findings are reflective of a broad perspective within the NGO sector.

The analysis revealed that flexibility significantly contributes to competitive advantage among healthcare NGOs. Respondents agreed that their organizations effectively adapt to changing conditions, quickly reconfigure workflows, and prioritize staff versatility.

The mean scores for the flexibility items indicated a general consensus on the importance of adaptability in meeting patient needs and enhancing operational efficiency. This finding aligns with the theoretical framework, which posits that flexibility in operations allows organizations to respond proactively to market changes.

The findings indicated that cost leadership is another critical factor influencing competitive advantage. Most respondents recognized the effectiveness of cost management practices in providing affordable services and optimizing resource utilization. The high mean scores associated with cost leadership statements suggest that organizations that focus on minimizing operational expenses tend to improve their market position. This finding is consistent with Porter's cost leadership strategy, emphasizing that efficient cost management can enhance competitive positioning.

Innovation emerged as a pivotal component in driving competitive advantage among healthcare NGOs. Respondents reported that their organizations invest in new technologies and develop creative solutions to healthcare challenges. The analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between innovation and competitive advantage, suggesting that innovative practices lead to enhanced operational efficiency and service delivery. This finding supports the notion that fostering a culture of innovation is essential for organizations aiming to maintain a competitive edge in the healthcare sector. Service reliability was identified as a crucial determinant of competitive advantage, with respondents emphasizing the importance of consistently delivering high-quality services. The analysis showed that maintaining service reliability significantly improves patient trust and satisfaction. High mean scores for service reliability items indicate that organizations prioritize effective quality assurance mechanisms, which contribute positively to their overall performance. This finding highlights the critical role of service reliability in building a loyal client base and enhancing competitive advantage.

The inferential analysis provided robust evidence of the relationships between the independent variables and competitive advantage. The model summary indicated a strong correlation, with R Square values showing that a significant proportion of the variance in competitive advantage could be explained by the model. The regression analysis underscored the significant contributions of service reliability, cost leadership, innovation, and flexibility to competitive advantage, with service reliability being the most influential predictor. ANOVA results confirmed the statistical significance of the model, indicating that the independent variables collectively enhance competitive advantage.

In summary, the research findings indicate that flexibility, cost leadership, innovation, and service reliability are integral components influencing the competitive advantage of healthcare NGOs in Mandera County. By prioritizing these factors, organizations can enhance their operational efficiency and better meet the needs of their clients.

5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, this research highlights the critical factors influencing competitive advantage among healthcare NGOs in Mandera County, Kenya. The findings underscore the importance of flexibility, cost leadership, innovation, and service reliability in shaping the operational strategies of these organizations. Each of these factors plays a distinct role in enhancing competitive positioning, contributing to overall organizational performance and sustainability.

Flexibility allows healthcare NGOs to adapt to rapidly changing conditions, ensuring that they can effectively respond to evolving patient needs. The emphasis on cost leadership demonstrates that managing expenses is vital for providing affordable services and maintaining a competitive edge in a resource-constrained environment. Moreover,

innovation fosters a culture of continuous improvement, enabling organizations to develop creative solutions to healthcare challenges and enhance service delivery.

Service reliability emerges as a cornerstone of competitive advantage, with the ability to consistently deliver high-quality services significantly impacting patient trust and satisfaction. The findings indicate that healthcare NGOs that prioritize service reliability are more likely to maintain a loyal client base and achieve better overall performance.

This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence of the relationships between these factors and competitive advantage. The implications of these findings are significant for healthcare NGOs, as they highlight the strategic areas that require attention to enhance their competitive positioning in the healthcare sector.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for healthcare NGOs in Mandera County:

1. **Enhance Flexibility in Operations:** Organizations should implement strategies that promote flexibility within their operations. This could involve investing in staff training to develop versatile teams capable of adapting to changing circumstances and reconfiguring workflows efficiently.
2. **Focus on Cost Management:** Healthcare NGOs should prioritize cost leadership by adopting effective cost management practices. This could involve conducting regular financial reviews to identify areas for cost reduction without compromising service quality, ultimately ensuring the affordability of services offered.

3. **Invest in Innovation:** To maintain a competitive edge, healthcare NGOs must foster a culture of innovation. This can be achieved by investing in new technologies and encouraging creative problem-solving approaches among staff. Collaboration with external partners, such as academic institutions and private sector organizations, can also facilitate innovative practices.
4. **Strengthen Service Reliability:** Organizations should implement robust quality assurance mechanisms to enhance service reliability. Regular training for staff, patient feedback mechanisms, and continuous monitoring of service delivery can help maintain high standards and improve patient satisfaction.

5.5 Recommendations Further Research

To build on the findings of this study, the following areas for further research are recommended:

1. **Longitudinal Studies:** Conduct longitudinal studies to assess the impact of the identified factors on competitive advantage over time. This would provide deeper insights into how these factors evolve and influence organizational performance in the dynamic healthcare sector.
2. **Comparative Studies:** Explore comparative studies across different regions or types of NGOs to examine how contextual factors influence competitive advantage. Such research could highlight best practices and unique challenges faced by organizations in various settings.
3. **Qualitative Research:** Incorporate qualitative methods, such as interviews and focus groups, to gain deeper insights into the perceptions and experiences of healthcare NGO staff regarding the factors influencing competitive advantage.

4. **Impact of External Factors:** Investigate the impact of external factors, such as regulatory changes and economic conditions, on the competitive advantage of healthcare NGOs. Understanding these influences can help organizations develop more robust strategies to navigate external challenges.



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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Introduction

YUNIS SHEIKH ISSACK,

P.O. BOX, 342-01000

THIKA.

Dear Respondent,

REF: REQUEST FOR DATA COLLECTION

I am now pursuing a Master's Degree in Business Administration at Mount Kenya University, Nairobi Campus. I'm working on a project titled " INFLUENCE OF STRATEGIC AGILITY ON COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AMONG THE HEALTHCARE NGOS IN MANDERA COUNTY KENYA" Please complete the accompanying questionnaire to assist me in gathering the required data for this research.

I guarantee that the information you submit will be kept private and will only be used for academic reasons.

Please accept my heartfelt gratitude.

Yours faithfully,

YUNIS SHEIKH ISSACK

Appendix II: Consent Form

Dear Participant,

I'd like to ask you to take part in a research project called (**INFLUENCE OF STRATEGIC AGILITY ON COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AMONG THE HEALTHCARE NGOS IN MANDERA COUNTY KENYA.**): I'm writing my master's project while I'm enrolled at Mount Kenya University's (MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION) program. The investigational goal of the study is to: (**The study seeks to examine the influence of strategic agility on the competitive advantage of healthcare non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Mandera County, Kenya.**)

It is entirely up to you whether or not you take part in this study. You may choose not to answer any questions at all or leave them blank. Beyond the dangers associated with daily living, there are no recognized risks associated with involvement. Your comments will be kept private and anonymous. The results of this study's data will be kept confidential and only given as a combined total. Your specific responses to this questionnaire will only be known by the researchers. You won't directly gain anything by taking part in this study. However, you could find it fascinating to discuss the difficulties raised in the study, and it might also be helpful to the industry and to customers or other people in the future who have similar worries.

Please provide the most accurate responses you can to the questionnaire's questions if you accept to take part in this experiment. The completion time should be about seven minutes. To allow me to finish the project report, please return the questionnaire as soon as feasible.

Please contact the Ethics Review Committee, Mount Kenya University. P.O Box 342-01000-Thika. Email: cgsr@mku.ac.ke. Tel: 254709153000, if you have any inquiries concerning your rights as a study participant.

I appreciate your help with this crucial project.

CONSENT

I've read, understand, and have had a chance to ask questions about the material presented. I am aware that my participation is entirely optional and that I may stop at any moment, for any reason, and without incurring any fees. I am aware that a copy of this permission form will be sent to me. I freely consent to participate in this research.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____



Appendix III: Questionnaire

SECTION A: Background information

Age:

- Under 25
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55 and above

Gender:

- Male
- Female

Educational Level:

- Secondary
- Diploma
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctorate

Number of Years Worked in the NGO:

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7-10 years
- More than 10 years

SECTION B: flexibility on Competitive Advantage

What is your level of agreement with the following statements on the effect of process flexibility on Competitive Advantage Among the Healthcare NGOs in Mandera County Kenya? (Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree).

statements	1	2	3	4	5
Our NGO adapts its operations to changing conditions effectively.					
We reconfigure our workflows quickly in response to external pressures.					
Flexibility in processes helps us meet evolving patient needs efficiently.					
Staff versatility is crucial for our operational adaptability.					
Our ability to adjust processes enhances our competitive edge.					
Our NGO adapts its operations to changing conditions effectively.					

SECTION C: Cost leadership on Competitive Advantage

1. What is your level of agreement with the following statements on the effect of Cost leadership on Competitive Advantage Among the healthcare NGOs in Mandera County Kenya? (Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree).

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
Our NGO effectively manages costs to provide affordable services.					
We optimize resource utilization to reduce operational expenses.					
Implementing cost-saving measures has improved our market position.					
Our pricing strategy helps us stay competitive.					
Expense management is a key focus in our operations.					

SECTION D: Innovation on Competitive Advantage

What is your level of agreement with the following statements on effect of Innovation on Competitive Advantage Among the healthcare NGOs in Mandera County Kenya? (Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree).

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
Our NGO invests in new technologies to improve service delivery.					
We develop creative solutions to address healthcare challenges.					
Innovation in our processes has enhanced our operational efficiency.					
Product development initiatives have strengthened our competitive position.					
We foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation.					

SECTION E: Service reliability on Competitive Advantage

1. What is your level of agreement with the following statements on effect of Service reliability on Competitive Advantage Among the healthcare NGOs in Mandera County Kenya? (Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree).

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
Our NGO consistently delivers high-quality services.					
We have effective quality assurance mechanisms in place.					
Maintaining service reliability has improved patient trust and satisfaction.					
Reducing errors in service delivery is a key priority.					
Reliable service delivery enhances our competitive advantage.					


SECTION F: Competitive Advantage

2. What is your level of agreement with the following statements on Competitive Advantage Among the healthcare NGOs in Mandera County Kenya? (Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree).

Statements	1	2	3	4	5
Our NGO has a strong market share in Mandera County.					
We achieve good financial performance through strategic practices.					
High client retention rates contribute to our competitive advantage.					
We maintain high standards of service quality.					
Our competitive strategies enhance our overall performance and sustainability.					

Thank you

Appendix IV: ERC Letter



Mount Kenya University

REF: MKU/ISERC/4472
TO: YUNIS SHEIKH ISSACK
REG: MBA/2021/43419

Date: 04 October 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: INFLUENCE OF STRATEGIC AGILITY ON COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AMONG THE HEALTHCARE NGOS IN MANDERA COUNTY KENYA

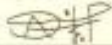
This is to inform you that **Mount Kenya University** has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is **3194**. The approval period is **04/10/2024 - 03/10/2025**.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements:

- i. Only approved documents including informed consents, study instruments, MTA will be used
- ii. All changes including amendments, deviations and violations are submitted for review and approval by **Mount Kenya University**
- iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to **Mount Kenya University** within 72 hours of notification
- iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affect the safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to **Mount Kenya University** within 72 hours
- v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions
- vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal
- vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to **Mount Kenya University**

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) <https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke> and also obtain other clearances needed.

Yours sincerely,




Dr. Alfred Owino, PhD
Chairman, Mount Kenya University ISERC

MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY
ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE
P. O. Box 342 - 01000,
THIKA

Main Campus, General Kago Road, P.O. Box 342-01000 Thika.
Cell: +254 709 153 000 / +254 709 153 200
Email: info@mku.ac.ke, Web: www.mku.ac.ke

Appendix V: Introduction Letter


Mount Kenya University

DIRECTORATE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

MBA/2021/43419

4th October, 2024

*National Commission for Science Technology & Innovation (NACOSTI)
Off Waiyaki Way, Upper Kabete,
P.O Box 30623- 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA*

Dear Sir/Madam,


RE: YUNIS SHEIKH ISSACK - REGISTRATION NO. MBA/2021/43419

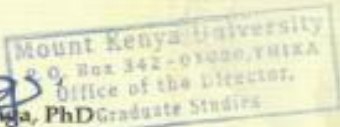
The purpose of this letter is to introduce the above named student who is pursuing **Master of Business Administration** in the department of **Accounting and Finance** in the school of **Business and Economics**.

The title of the research is **"Influence of Strategic Agility on Competitive Advantage Among the Healthcare NGOS in Mandera County, Kenya."** It has been cleared by the University's Ethics Review Committee (Certificate attached) and now has to proceed to the field to collect data between **October, 2024 and December, 2024**.

Any assistance accorded to the student will be highly appreciated.


Thank you.


Dr. Samuel M. Karenga, PhD
Director, Graduate Studies
Enc.


Mount Kenya University
P.O. Box 342-01000, Thika
Office of the Director,
Graduate Studies

Main Campus, General Kago Road, P.O. Box 342-01000 Thika.
Call: +254 709 163 000 / +254 709 163 300


Appendix VI: NACOSTI Authorization



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: 877496
Date of Issue: 10/October/2024

RESEARCH LICENSE




This is to Certify that Mr., YUNIS SHEIKH ISSACK of Mount Kenya University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Mandera on the topic: INFLUENCE OF STRATEGIC AGILITY ON COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AMONG THE HEALTHCARE NGOS IN MANDERA COUNTY KENYA for the period ending: 10/October/2025.

License No: NACOSTI/P/24/40993


877496

Applicant Identification Number



Director General

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION



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Appendix VII: Similarity Index

YUNIS SHEIKH

**INFLUENCE OF STRATEGIC AGILITY ON COMPETITIVE
ADVANTAGE AMONG THE HEALTHCARE NGOS IN MANDERA ...**

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